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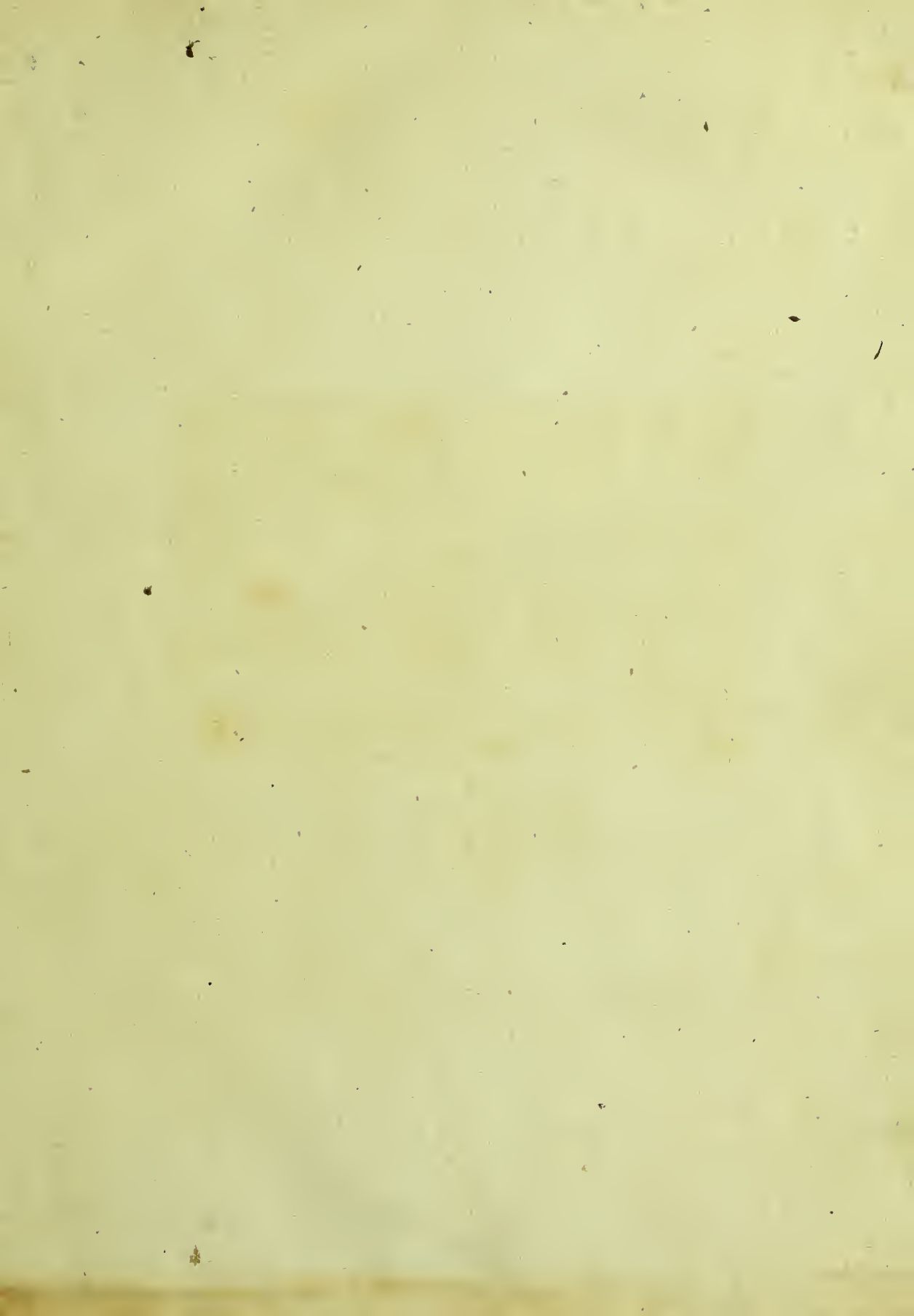
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ADDITIONAL MEMORIAL

TO THE

MANAGERS

OF THE

ROYAL INFIRMARY.

BY

JAMES GREGORY, M. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS, PROFESSOR OF THE
PRACTICE OF PHYSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH, AND
FIRST PHYSICIAN TO HIS MAJESTY IN SCOTLAND.

*Immensum reseramus opus; gens nescia veri
Ut residem longaue animum caligine mersum
Attollat cælo.*

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED BY MURRAY & COCHRANE, CRAIG'S CLOSE.

M, DCCC, III.

To D^r Percival
of Manchester
From The Author.



P R E F A C E.

NINE hundred funs have now gone down, without animadversion from me, on certain publications to which my former Memorial gave occasion; though some of them, especially one entitled an Answer to my Memorial, written by Mr John Bell, at the request of some of his professional brethren, and afterwards adopted and sanctioned by a solemn vote of thanks by the Royal College of Surgeons, must have generally been thought to require, on my part, not only a Reply, but the most complete and pointed refutation.

Appearances, I own, are much against me; yet I trust I shall be able to convince every person who is interested in this discussion, and most chiefly the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, that I had never doubted of the necessity of replying to that publication, nor ever been guilty of any wilful delay in doing so.

From the first sentence of the following Memorial it will appear, that it was not only written, but printed in such time, that I expected it would have been published early in spring 1801: and an attentive reader will easily perceive, from the tenor of the first 130 pages of it, and especially from many allusions, and *dates*, and calculations founded on these, incongruous with the present time, that those pages were printed in the course of the winter

1800 and 1801. But I found myself obliged very soon to alter my plan, in consequence of the Royal College of Surgeons having engaged in a lawsuit with the Managers of the Infirmary, on the subject which I had discussed in my former Memorial: for I deemed it at least indecent, if not something worse, to bring before the tribunal of the public, matters which were actually under the cognizance of the supreme Court of Justice in this country. Afterwards I found it expedient to delay, from time to time, the completion of the new plan which I had proposed to myself; in consequence of that mass of lawfuits, which grew rapidly out of the first, or out of one another; and occasionally brought to light many curious particulars, truly edifying in themselves, and likely to conduce very much to my original benevolent purpose. On this account, the writing and printing of the following Memorial went on slowly, and at irregular times, for near two years. When at last I had the agreeable surprise of hearing that all those lawfuits, which I thought might well have lasted two centuries, had been——not decided,——but quietly given up, after little more than two years of very spirited litigation, I found much remained to be done, indeed that the most important point of discussion remained untouched, to complete the plan of my Additional Memorial. In truth, the last 140 pages of it have been written since the beginning of February last. These peculiarities, of its having been written at different times, and its having actually been in the press for two years and a half, will sufficiently account for the many glaring anachronisms that will be found in it: but as these do not affect the sense, or mar the argument in any respect, it is unnecessary to point them out particularly, or to endeavour to correct them as errors.

The general tenor of that Answer to my former Memorial, and the singularly auspicious and wonderful omens under which it came forth, equally precluded all thoughts of allowing it to pass unnoticed,

unnoticed, and without the most pointed reply. Without presuming in the least to call in question the extraordinary merit of all the other writings of the same author, especially of his controversial writings, which I believe they all are to a greater or less degree, I do not scruple to say, that his Answer to my Memorial is his masterpiece. I doubt even whether there be in the long annals of medical controversy any thing *simile aut secundum*. It may fairly be regarded as a kind of caricatura, or extreme case, fit to show in the strongest light the genuine spirit of a medical disputant. The ingenious author of it, in composing his immortal work, had some great advantages, such as no medical disputant ever had before, and such as he himself probably will never have again. He appears in it, *not* as expressing his own sentiments, but as a spirited and eloquent advocate in behalf of others ; to gratify whose passions, or to promote whose interest, he has strongly expressed sentiments, not only with respect to me, but with respect to many other persons, and many things, diametrically opposite to those sentiments which he used to express most freely, and which were generally understood to be his own genuine thoughts. In the same good cause, he has, with equal boldness, asserted many things, new and wonderful, which he could have no reason to believe ; many of which he must have known to be false ; and some of which he, and all his clients, must have known to be impossible. Yet no person can be so irrational and uncandid as to think him, in any degree, answerable for the justness of those sentiments, or the truth of those assertions, which he has expressed so strongly. I dare say he would laugh in the face of any person, who should understand so little of the joke, as to ask of him to prove what he has asserted. As little, or less if possible, can any individual of his clients be required to prove those assertions : for they are not the assertions, or avowed sentiments, of any one of them individually, but only the sentiments and assertions of a party, which employed one of their own number, with whose

character

character they were well acquainted, and whose high controversial talents they very justly esteemed, to plead their cause at the bar of the public. Never was a set of clients more fortunate in their lawyer, or a lawyer in a set of clients.

*Poeta quum primum animum ad scribendum adpulit,
Id sibi negoti credidit solum dari,
Populo ut placerent, quas fecisset fabulas ;*

and that his fables pleased them perfectly, is amply testified by their vote of thanks.

Independently of all other considerations, the Philippic in question would have been acceptable, and highly valuable, to me, as showing indisputably, how far a medical author can go in controversy, with respect to the *facts* which he assumes and asserts, the inferences which he pretends to deduce from them, and the inveterate rancour with which he reviles his opponent: for I had had the mortification to learn, that many persons had distrusted, and regarded as at least exaggerations if not fictions of mine, the examples which in my former Memorial I had given of our everlasting medical warfare: but now I have the pleasure of discussing a genuine and very recent sample of that noble spirit, which far surpasses, not only my former experience of such things, but the utmost effort of my imagination.

In another respect, it was still more valuable to me, and inestimable to the public: it showed irresistibly, and much better than I could have done, to the Managers of the Infirmary, and to the public, the urgent necessity of some selection among the Surgeons for the Hospital-duty, as I had recommended; and it even gave assistance in that selection, which I could not have done, by marking some of those who ought most certainly to be excluded.

It

It would be arrant Quixotism to expect, that any remarks which I can offer on that publication should make medical disputants either wiser or better ; more correct as to their facts ; more cautious in their assertions ; more accurate in their reasonings ; more candid in their disputes, or less virulent in their wrath. But perhaps even medical disputants will learn, from so striking an example, that the theory and practice of medical controversy, however skilfully employed, will not avail in questions of plain expediency, of moral duty, and of common sense. When, on these subjects, the ablest disputant assumes and asserts facts which exist only in his own imagination ; well if there ; when, from his assumed facts, he draws conclusions contrary to the best-established principles of logic and the common sense of mankind, overlooking other inferences the most obvious and indisputable from the same facts, which are fatal to his own cause ; he will soon feel, to his sorrow, that there are tests of truth, and modes of reasoning, of which he never dreamed, and which he will find it in vain to dispute.

And when such a disputant, on subjects level to the common understanding of mankind, endeavours to eke out his scanty facts, and to strengthen his feeble reasoning, by personal invective against his opponent, he will discover, sooner or later, that in other games, as well as at chess, the bad play of one is the good luck of another ; and the only good luck which he can expect to meet with.

To give some notion of the purpose of the following Memorial, and of the principal subjects discussed in it, it is necessary to mention the following particulars.

Very soon after my former Memorial was distributed, I learned that there was some surmise of its being somehow unfavourable or uncandid to certain living members of the Royal College of Surgeons. The surmise was groundless ; but not on that account to be disregarded. I was therefore at much pains to put an end to all such surmises, for which a most favourable opportunity offered

at that very time, in the course of some correspondence which Mr John Bell had begun with me, and in which he declared his genuine sentiments, and his own resolution, not to be concerned in any dispute with the Managers of the Infirmary, but to leave the business of arranging the surgical department of the Hospital entirely to their decision.

To Mr John Bell, therefore, I addressed a long letter, containing the most complete and explicit disavowal of all such intentions on my part, and the most ample proof that no such thing was in fact contained in my Memorial. These things I begged of him to explain to his professional brethren; over whom, at least over one great party of whom, I understood he had much influence. Afterwards, when I learned that he had changed his mind, and was not only to engage in the dispute with the Managers, but even to appear as the avenger and advocate of his professional brethren before the public, I begged of him to communicate to them the whole of that letter of mine. When his admirable Answer appeared, with much astonishment and equal edification, I observed, that not one word was said in it of our correspondence, or of my complete vindication of myself from that unworthy conduct, which was strongly imputed to me in the letter of his clients prefixed to his pamphlet; in which letter they requested his aid to undo and avenge the pretended wrong that I had done them. That strange omission in his very eloquent pleading I have taken care to supply, by printing the whole of our correspondence on that subject, (page 34. to 78. of this Memorial).

On pretence of vindicating his professional brethren from that pretended wrong which they were pleased to fancy I had done them, he has taken occasion to revile me in a new and very masterly style; unparalleled, I believe, in all the voluminous annals of medical warfare. Ignorance, falsehood, arrogance, malevolence, hypocrisy, of course made a part of the character which he has given me: but

all

all this or more might have been done by other authors. His superior genius is displayed in discovering new topics of invective, and in the manner in which he has availed himself of them : my stature, my countenance, my dress, my writing Latin, my having carried arms as a volunteer, the amiable character of my father, my family-history for some generations, the number of my ancestors who have been Professors, all, all, are made subjects of reproach to me. From the account that he has had the goodness to give of myself, both body and mind, it is evident that I must be one of the most formidable monsters that ever appeared in the world. That I should be entitled to take precedence of the Irish giant, is abundantly plain ; but I think, without much vanity, I might be a better speculation for a showman than any rhinoceros or royal tyger that ever yet was exhibited.

This great liberality on his part I take very kindly of him : for I should have been sadly mortified to have been represented as one of those pitiful little villains, whose peccadillos might be expiated by transportation for fourteen years, or even for life, to Botany Bay.

But such a monster as he describes me would never be received, or permitted to live, in that flourishing colony ; lest he should disturb the peace and corrupt the morals of its happy and virtuous inhabitants. A few remarks, which seemed peculiarly wanted for the better understanding and properly relishing that part of his *Philippic*, will be found between the 103d and the 109th of the following pages.

By a wonderfully happy thought, the more meritorious that it seems to be perfectly original and new, he has contrived to give myself as the avowed author of one of the most extravagant and absurd fictions, which he has so freely and dexterously employed, in order to make me contemptible and infamous. The fiction itself is so absurd, that no person of competent understanding and knowledge ever could believe it ; but he has so precisely and strong-

ly asserted that I am the author of it, implying a plentiful lack both of truth and sense in me, that I am convinced many of his readers must have believed at least that part of his assertion. I have therefore thought it worth while to bestow a few pages (from 169. to 180.) of this Memorial, to do justice to so noble a specimen of controversial eloquence and candour.

I have also bestowed a few pages (121. to 141.) of this Memorial, to illustrate the full merit in point of fact, and the great rhetorical genius displayed, in his noble Philippic on my ignorance of surgery: an ignorance which he is pleased to say is criminal. To that ignorance, and to my applying to his profession the rules and canons of my own, and supposing surgery, like physic, an uncertain and speculative science, he imputes almost all that I had urged in my former Memorial; taking care to forget that the strong considerations and arguments therein contained are founded on those very facts and undeniable principles most strongly asserted by his worthy predecessor Deacon Kennedy, and *his* accomplices; on the faith of which their detestable bargain with the Managers of the Infirmary was made in 1738; and taking care of course not to see, or give his readers an opportunity to see, that in reviling me for my criminal ignorance of surgery displayed in my former Memorial, he was giving the lie direct to all that Deacon Kennedy and his friends had said in theirs; just as much as he did in his own new and splendid discovery, (promulgated in his Answer to me), that a Surgeon cannot, like a Physician, improve by practice, but must be *perfect in operations before he presume to touch the knife*.

In so great a rhetorical work as Mr John Bell's Answer to me, the good old praise-worthy expedient of misquoting my words, and misrepresenting my meaning, of course, was not neglected. One splendid example of this kind, which I have discussed (page 145.), seems to have been intended, and at least it is employed, to give him an opportunity of reviling me bitterly for an offer which

I had made, the most liberal and candid that could be desired or conceived. Some others of those misquotations, particularly one discussed (page 180.) and one considered (page 306.) and one considered (page 307.) seem to be intended for no other purpose, but just to show how completely he can misquote my words and misrepresent my meaning: but they are not on this account the less meritorious. The first of the three (page 180.) is so admirable, that it amounts to representing me as having asserted a most notorious falsehood, injurious to my preceptors and colleagues in this University, and disgraceful to the University itself: but withal diametrically opposite to the well known and honourable truth which I had expressed in the plainest terms: which terms he certainly knew, for he has used some of them; and he *could not* have misunderstood my meaning.

On pretence of vindicating the memory of the late DR CULLEN from a pretended wrong that I had done to it, Mr John Bell has contrived to pay his compliments in a new and wonderful manner, not only to Dr Cullen personally, but to all the Professors of Physic in this University; whose conduct in the examining of students, with a view to promote them to the degree of Doctor of Physic, he represents as the most absurd, illiberal, and disgraceful, that can be conceived: so bad indeed, that, if his account of it were believed, it would be almost infamous to obtain the Diploma of Doctor of Physic from the University of Edinburgh: nay it would have been so in the time of Dr Cullen, whom he represents as the author of that abominable but unheard-of mode of proceeding. That wonderful effort of rhetoric, which could at once vindicate Dr Cullen from *no wrong* and *no blame*, and completely traduce him and all his colleagues, I have discussed at full length (page 182. to 198.) in this Memorial.

Through the whole of his Answer to me, Mr John Bell has taken occasion to trumpet forth the praises of his professional brethren,

both in point of humanity, and in point of great and uniform skill and knowledge of surgery. Both of these topics one should have thought, *a priori*, that it must have exceeded all power of the human face, even to have attempted. With respect to the first of them, their great humanity, and tender regard for the safety and welfare of their patients: the bargain which their predecessors made with the Managers of the Infirmary in 1738; the hateful means by which that bargain was forced upon the Managers; the wonderful publication of Deacon Kennedy and his friends, analysed in my former Memorial; the violent contest of the Surgeons with the Managers near thirty years after, when the latter, convinced by sad experience of the greatness of the evil which had been done, endeavoured, but in vain, to undo it; the conduct of the College of Surgeons only eight years before my Memorial appeared, when Dr Duncan made another fruitless attempt to get that sad evil rectified; any one of these things might well have precluded all thoughts of praising the College of Surgeons on account of their zeal for the good of their hospital-patients: but as all of them put together have not had this effect, I have produced (page 142. of this Memorial) one little additional document, which *must be decisive*: a unanimous resolution of that Society, so lately as the year 1784, which I have good reason to believe still remains on their records, that they would *not give the Managers an opportunity of adopting measures, which, however advantageous they might be to the Hospital, would be attended with essential prejudice to the interest of the Royal College.*

The other point, that of the great and uniform skill, and universally amiable and respectable character, of every member of their College, was at least equally wonderful and edifying. Their professional and personal disputes, the inveteracy with which these were carried on, their implacable warfare, the singularly gross and outrageous terms in which some of them had reviled their brethren,

thren, were notorious beyond all possibility of dispute or palliation. Some of the monuments of these things were in print. One of them, too bad as I thought to be quoted in my former Memorial, I have taken care to print verbatim in this, (page 213. to 227.), illustrated with a very ample commentary, and a brief chronological view of their professional warfare, which occupies full 70 pages, (from 227. to 296.). This I have thought it necessary to do, not only for the amusement of the idle, and gratification of the curious, but for the vindication of my own veracity, which was so strongly brought into question.

For the same good purpose, I have been at some pains to show, (page 269. to 283.), what a malignant influence their personal, professional, and corporation disputes, had on their consultations and practice even in the Royal Infirmary. I had the pleasure of observing, that the spirit of controversy was so restless, and the habit of it so inveterate, that their very ingenious and eloquent advocate, when he was pleading their cause at the bar of the public, and maintaining most strongly the perfection of their art, the certainty of their science, and the uniform skill of all his professional brethren, could not refrain from a professional dispute himself, with respect to one of the commonest operations in surgery; on which he chose to differ from most of his brethren, and to treat their opinion, and practice, and even the instrument which they usually employed, with the most sovereign contempt. (276. to 280.).

Yet great as his merit has been in all these respects, it bears no sensible proportion to the astonishing powers of rhetorical genius, which he has displayed on two other subjects; both of which are deeply interesting to the Managers and to the public. I have therefore discussed them both at full length in this Memorial.

The first of them relates to a very serious evil, which had often occurred in the Surgeons wards, and which I always understood
to

to have proceeded ultimately from the very improper mode of surgical attendance in them. From considerations of delicacy, which I am now convinced were not only needless, but injudicious, in my former Memorial, I avoided any minute description, or even particular mention, of the evil in question; contenting myself with alluding to it in the most delicate and cautious terms. I knew that my allusion, general as it was, could not fail to be understood by every Surgeon, and almost by every student who had attended in the surgeons wards; and consequently that it could easily be explained to any of the Managers who were not already acquainted with the subject to which it related. I knew that it was too great and notorious an evil to be either denied or explained away; and I did not wish to shock the public by any particular or unnecessary knowledge of it. My object was to get it and many other evils reformed; not to make the Surgeons odious, or the Hospital itself horrible to the public.

Mr John Bell has thought and acted very differently. Far from imitating my reserve and delicacy on that tender point, he has gone completely to the opposite extreme; has described the evil minutely, painted it in the blackest colours, and proclaimed it in all its horrors. For what purpose? it may be asked. For no other that I can conceive, but what he has explained in one short sentence of his Philippic; namely, to transfer the blame of it from the Surgeons to the Physicians, or perhaps to the general conduct of the Infirmary, implying the most atrocious negligence on the part of the Managers. This point is discussed from 324. to 371. of the following pages.

The second of those subjects which he has treated in so masterly a style, is the institution of Clinical Lectures, read by some of the Professors of Physic on the cases of the patients entrusted to their care; for whose accommodation they are allowed by the Managers

two small wards, separate from the great wards of the Hospital under the care of the ordinary Physicians.

This institution of Clinical Lectures has now subsisted more than half a century ; has been generally and highly approved of ; has been imitated in many other places ; as well it might be, for it is difficult to conceive any thing more innocent at least, if not more laudable, in the management of the sick poor received into an Hospital. Nay, Mr John Bell himself does not say otherwise ; but bestows the most extravagant praises on the Managers for permitting, and on the Professors of Physic for reading those lectures, and conducting the practice to which they relate : but at the same time gives such an account of the nature and purpose of Clinical Lectures, and of the manner in which they are conducted, as must make the Professors who conduct them, the Managers who permit them, and the Hospital itself, objects of indignation and horror to the public ; at least to all who believe what he has so confidently asserted. Long before his Answer to me came forth, I had the pleasure of hearing much of the account that he was to give of the Clinical Lectures, which I understood was the part of his work on which he chiefly valued himself. My expectations of course were very high ; but they have not been disappointed.

That most splendid part of his Philippic I have discussed, as in duty bound, at full length, (page 372. to 512.) of the following Memorial.

A work of such a new and marvellous kind, as Mr John Bell's Answer to me, could not fail to be received with much astonishment, and some incredulity, by the profane and ignorant vulgar, who knew nothing of the spirit and inveteracy of medical warfare. Whether this incredulity was foreseen, or only learned by experience, after the work in question was published, and had become a subject of general conversation, I really do not know.

There

There was some secret history about it, which I never could get at the bottom of. But I know well, from many questions put to myself, soon after it was published, that it did excite both amazement and incredulity in a very high degree: and I take it for granted, that the author of it, and his clients, must have known much more of that than ever I did. At any rate, it is certain, that, in *less than a month* after it was published, Mr John Bell had the honour to receive the public and solemn thanks of the Royal College of Surgeons, for his Answer to me. If there had been any doubt, which I presume there was not, of the intent and purpose of that vote of thanks, the use that was almost immediately made of it would have removed all doubt, and explained it completely. The vote of thanks was published in the Newspapers, and actually made, repeatedly, a part of the advertisement recommending the work to the attention and favour of the public.

Having preserved a copy of that most precious and original advertisement, I reprint it here verbatim, for the gratification of the curious.

“ Just published, by Peter Hill, Edinburgh, and Cadell & Davies, and Longman & Rees, London; and to be had of Brash & Reid, Glasgow, and J. Burnett, Aberdeen, in one volume Royal octavo, price Four Shillings and Sixpence,

“ ANSWER for the Junior Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, to the MEMORIAL of Dr JAMES GREGORY, Professor of the Practice of Physic, &c. &c. by JOHN BELL, Surgeon.

“ This Memorial, dangerous to the character of the younger part of the profession, and ruinous, in the opinion of many, to an Institution which has long flourished under the care of the Royal College of Surgeons, was composed with great ability,
“ and

“ and distributed with an unsparing hand, and with no small expence.

“ ‘It is from more respectable motives than the private gratification he might feel, that the Author of the Reply chuses, at this time, to strengthen his claims on the attention of the public and of his Profession, by announcing the approbation of the Royal College of Surgeons.

“ SIR,

“ At the desire, and in the name of the Royal College of Surgeons, I have the honour of returning you their thanks for the Answer you have composed to Dr Gregory’s Memorial; and of intimating to you, that the College approve of the manner in which you have expressed their general sense of the relation which exists between the College of Surgeons and the Royal Infirmary. —I am, Sir, Your most obedient servant,

“ *John Bell, Esq; Surgeon.*

“ JAMES LAW.”

“ *December 9. 1800.*”

“ This question, which is of national importance, since it relates to the education of Young Men in a necessary and useful Profession, is now before the country, and to be tried in the Courts of Justice.”

Much was implied in the original request of one party of the Junior Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons to Mr John Bell to write an Answer to my Memorial: and much more in the vote of thanks to him, in the name of the whole Royal College, for that great work, which he had so happily accomplished; more indeed than can easily be expressed in words.

In the former, (the request), it is evidently implied, that his clients frankly acknowledged his superior and unrivalled talents as a medical author, especially as a controversial writer; that they ap-

proved and admired his peculiar mode of reasoning, and that kind of eloquence in which he chiefly excelled ; and that they seriously expected that such reasoning and eloquence, employed in answer to me, would gain belief, would serve their cause, and contribute to raise themselves and their profession in the estimation of the public. Into this strange, or, as I should have thought it, impossible mistake, they fell, at the very time when their own attention and that of the public was strongly called to the disgraceful and odious spirit of medical warfare, of which, in my former Memorial, I had given a fair account, illustrated by some good samples, and a few gentle allusions to the disputes in which their Royal College had long been embroiled, and to the singular inveteracy with which these were conducted.

In the latter (the vote of thanks) was implied, that they were pleased with the manner in which their ingenious and eloquent advocate had executed the honourable task assigned to him ; and that, even after they had time to read and maturely consider what he had written, and to hear what others said of it, they never once suspected that, whether it were true or false, it was much more than enough, whatever might become of their contest with the Managers as a legal question, to damn themselves, and their predecessors, in the opinion of their countrymen. But such is the singular and admirable nature of the argument in their favour, that it may well be doubted whether they be not, by their own approbation of it, as testified by their vote of thanks, precluded from the benefit of that alternative, or *dilemma* ; and *ipso facto* obliged to abide by the simple, and, with respect to themselves, the most unfavourable supposition, that the assertions contained in it are all true, and by them believed or known to be so. Certainly no person, however well acquainted with the spirit and inveteracy of medical warfare, could ever believe, or think it possible, that a whole Royal College of Surgeons, or even the majority of them, legally

legally entitled to act in the name of the whole, should deliberately vote their thanks to one of their own number for asserting, in their cause, and in their name, a number of things grossly injurious to those of whom they were asserted, unless the said Royal College, or the majority of it acting for the whole, believed and knew that all those assertions were true. This kind of adoption and sanction of the assertions contained in the Philippic of their own avowed agent, is evidently implied in their vote of thanks as published in the newspapers; especially as the things to which those wonderful assertions related, must have been perfectly known to all of them who had been educated in this University or in this city; so that there could be no *mistake* about them. But further, by the very words of the last clause of their vote of thanks to Mr John Bell, testifying, "That the College approve of the manner in which you have expressed their *general sense* of the relation which exists between the College of Surgeons and the Royal Infirmary," the attention of the public was peculiarly directed to that part of his work, undoubtedly by far the most interesting, the most marvellous, and the most atrocious part of it: and the same public was irresistibly led to believe that the College of Surgeons, whose *general sense* it expressed, fully vouched for the truth of every assertion therein contained. The contrary supposition, that so respectable and learned a body as the College of Surgeons had thanked Mr John Bell for asserting, as *their general sense*, a number of things, all the most important of which they must have known to be *false*, and many of which they must have known to be *impossible*, could never be admitted, nay scarce thought of, as being at once almost incredible, and grossly injurious to that Royal College. To these public and obvious considerations must be added one or two little fragments of private history, the authenticity of which, I presume, will not be questioned.

That vote of thanks was given by the Royal College of Surgeons deliberately, after due consideration and perfect knowledge of the subject, and in defiance of the full warning and strong remonstrances of one of the Fellows of that College, (by name Mr John Thomson), who saw clearly how much was implied in it; though probably even he did not suspect what an important use was almost instantly to be made of it. He earnestly, but in vain, intreated them *not* to vote the thanks of the College for such a work; and to leave it to those individuals to thank Mr John Bell for his "*Answer*," who had employed him to write it, and who consequently were the best judges of its merit.

Soon after, and repeatedly since, even so lately as when I was writing and printing the latter part of the following Memorial, I had the pleasure of hearing, that certain Fellows of that College boasted of that very marvellous and atrocious part of the Answer to me, not only as an admirable specimen of superior genius, which I acknowledge it to be, but as a thing perfectly decisive and unanswerable; such a thing as "*I durst not even attempt to answer.*" As to its being unanswerable, or unanswered, they are still at liberty to judge for themselves: but at least they must own that I have humbly ventured to attempt to answer it.

The invectives so liberally poured forth against myself personally, and all the marvellous assertions with respect to me, very probably might have gone unanswered, even to the day of judgment: for long before I read them, I had learned from good authority, that "*He that walketh uprightly walketh surely.*"

The ingenious attack made on me and my colleagues, the Professors of Physic, for our pretended unworthy and disgraceful conduct in the discharge of our Academical duty, might also have passed unnoticed, on the old principle, familiar to us all,

*Exilis domus est, ubi non et multa supersunt,
Et dominum fallunt; et profunt furibus.—*

If our credit could have been shaken by such an attack, it would not have been worth contending for.

But the malevolent attack on the management of the Hospital, in the account given of the cause of the bad condition and cruel sufferings of many of the Surgeons patients, and still worse in the account given of the atrocious breach of trust in the Managers in permitting, and of the Professors of Physic in conducting the clinical lectures, could not be allowed to pass unanswered. It was written in a style, and vaunted in a manner, well calculated to make it gain belief, and produce a strong effect among those who were most likely to be hurt by it: for the probable injury to be apprehended to the slender funds of the Infirmary, by making it an object of horror to the rich, instead of protection and liberal encouragement, was the least of the evils in view. The cruel wrong to the poor and unhappy, who might have occasion to seek relief to their misery under the roof of this Hospital, was by far the most serious consideration. It was tearing from them their last hope and comfort in this world: for if they believed what they found so boldly asserted, and so strongly sanctioned, they must have shunned the Hospital as the worst of evils; or, if driven to it by hard necessity, they must have entered it with such sentiments of dread and horror, as could not fail to aggravate their sufferings, increase their danger, and often render unavailing all the skill of Physicians and Surgeons, and baffle all the powers of medicine.

As I should have thought myself, so I presume I should have been thought by others, to have tacitly acknowledged the truth of those horrible misrepresentations, and to have been an accomplice in the wrong that was done, if I had failed to refute them, when the means of doing this were fully in my power. But easy as this work might appear in one point of view, in another it was a matter of great nicety, if not of difficulty, and required on my part peculiar caution.

Such

Such marvellous and horrible assertions as I have had occasion to consider, would soon and easily have been discussed, if they had rested on the authority of only one individual, however eminent in medical controversy. A mere contradiction of them, one by one, and a request to have some evidence of them stated, (of which there was not a vestige in the publication to which I allude), might well have sufficed, according to the common maxim of law and equity, *Affirmanti incumbit probatio*: and such a simple contradiction and request, would certainly have been much more rational than the undertaking to *refute* or *disprove* those assertions.

But after they were adopted and sanctioned by the Royal College of Surgeons, that mode of proceeding was not to be thought of. I should have stood in the disgraceful situation, of affirming or denying, in direct contradiction, not to one individual only, but to many, or perhaps to a whole society, every individual of which might be presumed to know as much as I did of the matters in dispute. The honestest smuggler that ever appeared in the Court of Exchequer, let him swear his best, would hardly save either his ship or cargo, if a dozen or two of active customhouse officers swore point blank against every thing that he swore: and a simple tide-waiter would find it difficult to make good his seizure, if in the same court he had to swear singly against a whole gang of honest smugglers. My experience of medical facts and medical testimony, long before I saw the vote of thanks, would have been more than enough to deter me from engaging in such a foolish, disgraceful, and fruitless contest.

In compliment therefore to the Royal College of Surgeons, as well as to their very spirited and eloquent Advocate, I have followed a very different plan; more tedious and laborious I must confess, but, I trust, much more effectual for my purpose, as well as more respectful and honourable to them. Instead of merely contradicting, and requiring of them to prove what they had asserted,

ferted, I have on every important point carefully stated my *reasons* for distrusting or contradicting them. These *reasons* appear to me so strong as *bona fide* to disprove all the most important of their pretended facts. If they think otherwise, it will be easy, and I dare say very pleasant, to them, to show the imperfection or fallacy of the reasons which I have assigned for disbelieving their most confident assertions. They probably did not expect such a patient and candid proceeding on my part: but they cannot take it amiss; nay they cannot, without absurdity and inconsistency, fail to be highly pleased with it. They cannot fail to see that I meet them fairly on that ground which they themselves have chosen. As to the difference of the weapons which we employ; they have taken their choice of those which they thought best for the purpose of attack: and I am well pleased to see them use so dexterously those weapons with which nature has wisely and liberally provided them;

“ *Its proper power to hurt, each creature feels ;*
 “ *Bulls aim their horns, and asses lift their heels ;*
 “ *'Tis a bear's talent not to kick, but hug ;*
 “ *And no man wonders he's not stung by Pug.*”

But they must excuse me if I decline attempting to use the same weapons, which I am no more capable of managing, than I am of wielding the spear of Goliath, the club of Hercules, or the shield of Achilles. I trust they will allow me to use, as it is merely for the purpose of defence, and without even the possibility of annoying them, the innocent weapons of plain truth, and fair, though strict reasoning.

They have taken care to express fully and candidly, that is, Mr John Bell, in their name and with their sanction, has declared explicitly (*Answer*, page 16.) their ignorance of logic. The truth of this modest and candid avowal cannot be doubted, as it is accompanied

accompanied with some unequivocal proofs of that lamentable deficiency: but if they are not also incapable of learning the first principles of logic, which I think they will hardly pretend that they are, for this would be equivalent to pretending that they are idiots, they must surely understand and admit, when they are pointed out to them, and illustrated by proper examples from their own publication, some of those common principles of logic, of which I have endeavoured to avail myself. They surely must understand, and believe, that every proposition, for example, every thing which they have asserted in their publication, must be either *true* or *false*. If what they have asserted be *true*, then I, and my colleagues, especially the Clinical Professors, and the Managers of the Infirmary, must be infamous and odious, and must all deserve to be hanged. Of this I presume they were fully aware at the time of the vote of thanks; but I doubt whether they were equally aware of what the consequence must be to themselves, in public estimation, that is in point of fame and fortune, for the rest of their lives, if their assertions with respect to us are *false*, and shall be completely disproved. Yet surely they must see this consequence when it is pointed out to them; and of course must be eager to establish, by the most convincing proofs, their original assertions, both for their own vindication in point of veracity and probity, and for the laudable purpose of convicting us of that base and atrocious conduct, which they have so boldly laid to our charge.

Whatever they may have known, or hereafter may choose to do, on that point, I am convinced they did not originally, and perhaps do not yet perceive another still more dire dilemma into which they have blindly run, in their great eagerness to make the Professors of Physic, and the Managers of the Infirmary, collectively, as well as myself individually, odious and infamous in the estimation of the public. But if they will attend fairly to their own assertions

fervations

fertions and arguments, and to my logical commentary on them, they will find that the sad dilemma stands thus. If their assertions are *false*, they themselves must be infamous: this I presume they will not dispute: but if their assertions are *true*, they must be still more infamous, and odious, and certainly ought all to be hanged; for their own conduct, and the share which they have had, both passively and actively, in those horrible atrocities: I mean not only for their guilt, in tacitly conniving long at such things, but, still worse, for their active exertions in making them more extensive, and perpetual; and even for representing the worst of them as things allowable and praise-worthy: a sentiment which, to my utter astonishment, they have strongly avowed in their Answer to me.

It is neither my business nor my inclination to help them out of that dilemma into which they have run. If this be possible, which I greatly doubt, they must do it for themselves. I cannot even ask of them to acknowledge the *error* of what they have said of myself, of my colleagues, and of the Managers of the Infirmary: for such an appeal to their candour, veracity, and probity, they would consider, not as a compliment, but as a bitter sarcasm and insult. I cannot ask of them to prove their assertions with respect to us, or even to refute that evidence which I have given in contradiction of their assertions; for they cannot fail to perceive, that every such attempt on their part would be an additional proof and illustration of all that I have said of them, and their facts, and their reasonings. I cannot ask of them to acquiesce silently in my refutation of their marvellous assertions, without either acknowledging their own numerous and complicated *errors*, or attempting to prove and establish their own *facts*, which I have presumed to disprove; for they cannot fail to know that such silent acquiescence on their part, in such circumstances, would imply that they felt, but had not candour enough to acknowledge, the truth and justness of all

that I have said of them. I need not ask of them to favour the world with a new set of facts, more wonderful and more atrocious than the last, and more injurious to me, and to my colleagues, and to the Managers of the Infirmary ; for this they will do of course, if they think it possible that their new facts shall be believed, while their old facts remain unproved, contradicted, and disproved. But they are heartily welcome to try the experiment. If any one of them, either singly, or in the name, and with the sanction and vote of thanks of his brethren, chooses to publish, in another pamphlet, or in the newspapers, that I have been guilty of many acts of horse-stealing, house-breaking, and highway robbery, that I was sentenced to transportation for fourteen years, and am in danger of being hanged for returning before my time was expired ; all which assertions are just as true, and as much to the purpose of their contest with the Managers of the Infirmary, and scarce so atrocious, as the most important of those contained in Mr John Bell's Answer to me ; they may be assured, that, far from being offended by such a publication, I shall be highly gratified.

As far as my single vote can go, they are equally welcome to pay their compliments handsomely to all the Professors of Physic, collectively, in any such publication : indeed I should be sorry if my learned colleagues had not at least some share of such an honourable testimonial.

But, unless they can give some very good reason for endeavouring to make the Managers of the Infirmary and the Hospital itself objects of indignation and horror to the inhabitants of this city, I must humbly and earnestly beg of Mr John Bell and his clients, to abstain in future from all such attempts ; the injustice and cruelty of which, relatively to the poor and unhappy, I have endeavoured to point out. They are heartily welcome to suggest to the Managers, to the ordinary Physicians and Surgeons, and to the Clinical Professors, whatever they think will be for the good of the

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the patients, with respect either to medical treatment, or to the general management of the Hospital. I can have no doubt that the Managers and the medical servants of the Infirmary will faithfully attend to all such suggestions; and do, as in duty bound, what they are convinced is best for the sick poor intrusted to their care. But if, contrary to all reasonable expectation, they shall fail in that duty, if they shall refuse to listen to any suggestions of improvement, or if they shall obstinately refuse to do what is clearly shewn to be right; then certainly Mr John Bell and his clients will be entitled to make their conduct the subject of the most public and severe reprehension.

Whatever regard they may pay to this request, there is yet another which I must urge very strongly to them, in full confidence that they will comply with it, as soon as they are aware of the nature and reason of it, and the importance of it to their own professional brethren. It is only this, That in whatever terms they may hereafter chuse to revile me individually, and my colleagues the Professors of Physic, and the Managers of the Infirmary, collectively, and whatever facts they may chuse to assert with respect to us, they will fairly and openly put their names to their own publications, and to any vote of thanks, or other testimony of approbation, by which they mean to sanction them, and recommend them to the public. They will understand that I wish them to avoid using any such general, collective, ambiguous appellations as that of the junior members of the Royal College of Surgeons, or even that of the Royal College of Surgeons, unless all the junior Fellows, or all the Fellows of the College, individually, concur in the assertions and sentiments so recommended and sanctioned. The *right* of the majority of the College of Surgeons to act for the whole, and in the name of the whole, cannot be disputed: but it is at least indelicate, if not worse, for the majority of their society to use *that* right in such a manner as may be greatly and permanently

nently injurious to the minority, even in point of professional and pecuniary interest; or to make it be believed that the minority had any share in transactions and sentiments, which they always reprobated as dishonourable in themselves, and disgraceful to their profession.

By the letter prefixed to Mr John Bell's Answer to me, every reader, not previously in the secret, must have understood, that all the junior Surgeons concurred in that request to him to answer my Memorial: but in fact Six of them had no more concern in that request than they had in the gunpowder treason. The case is still stronger with respect to the vote of thanks for that Answer, which vote was published in the newspapers. That vote of thanks, far from expressing the general or unanimous sense of every Fellow of the College individually, probably did not express the sense, even of the majority, perhaps of very little more than a third part, of their whole number. To the best of my information and belief, twenty-nine was the greatest number present at any of the meetings of their College about that time; of whom I am certain that FOURTEEN never did or could concur in such a vote of thanks. The whole number of the Fellows of the College of Surgeons at that time, I believe, was forty-six: but of this number at least a third part did not attend the meetings of the College, or take any concern in its transactions.

The wrong done, first to the minority of the younger surgeons, secondly to the minority of the whole Royal College, by the use of those collective names, was gross and glaring; and my remarks on that request and that vote of thanks would have made the wrong still greater, if I had not taken care to do justice to them individually, by publishing their names, (page 80. and 101. of the following Memorial), and testifying that they had no share in the transactions in question, and that consequently none of my remarks were applicable to them. With equal ease I could have published the names of the *majorities*, whose conduct has given occasion to those remarks; but I refrained from that rigorous iron justice, in consideration

sideration of a well-known maxim, *Summum jus, summa injuria*. The consequences of such an exposure might have been very serious to them individually, in point of fame and fortune, for the rest of their lives ; and what they and others might well have thought too severe a punishment for such a peccadillo as theirs. But this is to be understood with a *salvo jure* to them : If any one, or all, of them shall choose to avow as their own those assertions and sentiments, for which they voted their thanks, and which I have taken the liberty to discuss, I have no objections.

The situation of one gentleman, who concurred with the majority of the College of Surgeons in those transactions, was so particular, that it is but justice to him to mention what it was, and to make an exception in his favour ; more especially as he is already gone from Edinburgh, with a declared resolution of never returning to it, and consequently has not a fair opportunity to judge and act for himself on the present occasion. The person to whom I allude is MR FLANAGAN, an Irish Gentleman, who had not been educated in this city, and came to it between three and four years ago, an utter stranger, I believe, to every person in it, not excepting his own professional brethren. But as he was a stranger, they took him in : he became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh in the year 1800, and was the last who attended in the Infirmary on the system of rotation. Before he left Edinburgh, which I believe was some time in 1802, I had the pleasure of receiving from him the most convincing and gratifying evidence that he had formed an opinion of me widely different from that which he must have had when he concurred in the vote of thanks to Mr John Bell for his Answer to my Memorial. From some circumstances which have come to my knowledge, I strongly suspect that he found himself equally mistaken in the opinions which he first imbibed of some other persons, and of some things in Edinburgh. It seems to me but reasonable
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and just, *not* to hold him responsible for any thing contained in the “ *Answer*,” except what he chooses deliberately to avow and take upon himself; which I shrewdly suspect will be very little or nothing.

Lastly, As to Mr John Bell himself, to whom I should be peculiarly sorry to do any injustice, and whom I should not wish even to preclude from any of those advantages to which he is entitled by his twofold character of advocate and party; for reasons already stated, page v. of this Preface, and which will appear still more clearly in the following pages, I have thought myself bound to consider him in the capacity of an Advocate pleading the cause of others. That this is chiefly, if not solely, the case, is evident from his own declarations to me, from the letter prefixed to his Answer, and from the vote of thanks of his clients, testifying that he had expressed their general sense of the principal subject discussed in it: and I believe, if he were so disposed, he could easily prove, that many of the sentiments most strongly expressed in it are diametrically opposite to his own. But I have no right, and no wish, to obtrude on him that supposition. He is welcome to choose for himself, whether he shall be regarded only as an Advocate, implying, that he does not vouch for the truth of the assertions, and the justness of the sentiments, which he has expressed with such eloquence and force; or as a Party in the contest, implying, that he still maintains those assertions and sentiments, that he stakes his character, in point of probity and veracity, on the truth of them, and that he *bona fide* undertakes to prove what he had so deliberately and strongly asserted.

J. G.

ST ANDREW'S SQUARE, }
23d June 1803. }

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ADDITIONAL MEMORIAL

BY

DR GREGORY.

IT was easy to foresee that the Memorial, which six months ago I had the honour to address to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, would be to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but it was impossible ever to have dreamed that it was to have such effects as it has actually produced; that it was soon to give occasion to publications which would have done honour to the Royal College of Surgeons in Jerusalem in the days of Solomon, and that it was to call forth arguments and answers, which neither Solomon himself, nor the seven sages of Greece, if they had all been of his cabinet council, could ever have devised.

Very few of these publications require any reply, or any animadversions, on my part; for not only those which were intended to enforce and confirm my argument, but those which were intended to refute and overturn it, tend almost equally to illustrate and establish all that I had advanced.

But some of the writers to whose works I allude, have taken so much pains, and have done such essential service to my cause, that they

deserve my best acknowledgments and thanks for their labours ; and some of their lucubrations seem to require, as well as to deserve from me, a few notes, explanatory, historical, and critical, which I can easily furnish, and which it would be uncivil at least, if not ungrateful, in me to withhold.

OBSERVATIONS *on Mr ARROT'S* REMARKS.

Mr Arrot, one of the senior Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, has given the following *brief* account of the bargain between the Managers of the Infirmary and the Corporation of Surgeons in 1738.

“ The practice of surgical attendance now existing in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, has endured for no less than sixty years. At its commencement, it was not lightly or rashly adopted, but was the fruit of much deliberate negotiation between different bodies of men in this city. Two Hospitals had been formed for the charitable purpose of affording relief to the diseased poor in the neighbourhood. One of these Hospitals was under the management of the leading Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, and the other was superintended by a number of gentlemen, who had been incorporated by royal charter. At that time, the surgical department of this last Hospital, was intrusted to six Surgeons, chosen by the Managers. As it was found, however, that the existence of two rival Hospitals was prejudicial to the interests of both, a negotiation was entered into, for uniting them into one establishment, and was at last happily brought to a conclusion, in the year 1738, upon the following conditions :

It was stipulated, That the whole funds of the Hospital which was superintended by the leading Members of the College of Surgeons, should be transferred to the Incorporation of the Royal Infirmary ;

mary; and that all the Members of the College of Surgeons, should, when necessary, give their attendance to the patients in the united Hospital. And, on the other hand, it was agreed, that the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, in all time coming, should not only permit this attendance, but that they should not attempt to introduce any inequality or preference in the employment of the individual Members of the College of Surgeons, in their attendance on the Royal Infirmary."

Brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio. Mr Arrot's account of that memorable transaction is so brief as to give hardly any notion, or at best a very obscure, and imperfect, and erroneous notion of it, of the motives which led to it, and of the manner in which it was conducted. The two paragraphs quoted from his paper, contain nothing but what is true; but they do not contain the whole truth. They contain but a small part, and, to the best of my judgment, the least interesting part of the truth.

For aught that appears in them, the Royal Infirmary and the Surgeons Hospital might have been coeval, or the latter might have been established long before the former: The Infirmary might have been established without necessity, in rivalry or opposition to the Surgeons Hospital; this opposition might have proceeded from the most unworthy motives in the founders of the Infirmary; from the most sordid views of private interest; from personal malevolence and envy; from professional rancour, or malignant corporation-disputes; and the conductors of the Surgeons Hospital might have been forced to submit to those cruel terms which were dictated by the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, and to conclude with them a bargain disadvantageous and distressing to themselves personally, bad even for the charitable institution which they patronised, and unjust to the sick poor whom they charitably wished to relieve. All this they might have been supposed to have done for fear of that utter ruin which the influence and exertions
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of so powerful a corporation as the Royal Infirmary were likely to bring on the slender funds of the Surgeons Hospital.

But something very nearly the direct contrary of all this was the truth. The Royal Infirmary was established on a rational, humane, and liberal plan, long before the Surgeons Hospital was thought of. This Hospital was established evidently and notoriously in opposition to the Royal Infirmary, and for a purpose very different from what was at first pretended, but never believed; for as soon as that unworthy purpose was accomplished, the Surgeons Hospital was given up, and the sick poor, and the charitable contributions of the benevolent, were allowed to go to the Royal Infirmary.

The bargain, notoriously and intuitively bad for the sick poor, for whose benefit the Infirmary was instituted, was *forced* upon the Managers against their deliberate and better judgment, repeatedly expressed, and openly shewn, in the strongest manner, by their conduct in the appointing of a few of the most skilful Surgeons to be ordinary Surgeons of the Infirmary: It was forced upon them in violation of their charter, and in repugnance to the common sense of mankind, as shewn by the mode, adopted in all other places, of appointing Physicians and Surgeons to hospitals: It was forced on the Managers by an association of Surgeons; the majority, I presume, of the Gentlemen of that profession in Edinburgh: but if it had been done by the whole corporation unanimously, the case would not have been one jot mended. The motives of these Surgeons for what they did, were, in one plain word, *abominable*: neither more nor less than malignant envy and jealousy of a few of their own professional brethren, who, they feared, would, by their permanent attendance in the Hospital, acquire greater skill and manual dexterity as operators, and higher reputation, and consequently more lucrative practice, than the many not employed in the Hospital. The means by which those

Surgeons

Surgeons accomplished their purpose were *detestable*. They forced the Managers to submit to their terms, not by shewing that their plan would be for the good of the patients, nay, not even by pretending that they thought so, for the contrary was irresistibly implied, and almost expressed, in their own manifesto; but by establishing a rival Hospital in opposition to the Infirmary, and exerting themselves to the utmost to procure for their own Hospital those charitable contributions which otherwise would have come to the Infirmary: In short, by endeavouring to intercept the very needful supplies, and thus to frustrate the benevolent purpose for which the Infirmary was established. None of these overt acts, nor even of the motives from which they proceeded, can admit of doubt, or be explained away; the facts stand recorded in our minutes: the motives, happily, are avowed with little or no disguise, by the Surgeons themselves in their own printed Memorial.

Of all these things, so interesting in judging of the question at present in agitation, not one word is said by Mr Arrot in his state of the case: nor could it even be inferred or guessed from any thing which appears in his paper, that such things had ever been done, or such unworthy motives ever avowed.

Probably he thought it unnecessary to dwell on things so unpleasant in themselves, so little edifying, so little to the honour of human nature in general, and of his own profession in particular. Perhaps he thought the account which I had given of them so full and accurate as to supersede all further discussion, or even mention of such things, which certainly are *sacro digna silentio*. But, if this was his meaning, he must have overlooked a very obvious and strong consideration; that his paper was likely to fall into the hands of many people who never saw mine, and who knew not one word of what it contained; and who had never even seen that admirable Memorial of the Surgeons in 1737, which I have had the honour to dissect and anatomise. Such people must have
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been strangely misled, nay kept in the dark ; deprived of all means of setting themselves right, or even of discovering that they were wrong.

But I almost doubt whether Mr Arrot himself perceived the importance of those things which I had stated so fully, and which he completely omitted. From the coolness with which he mentions the general tenor of the bargain, and from the very gentle terms in which he expresses that “ it was agreed, that the Managers should not only permit this attendance,” (of all the members of the College of Surgeons), “ but that they should not attempt to introduce any inequality or preference in the employment of the individual members of the College of Surgeons, in their attendance on the Royal Infirmary ;” it should seem that he had not discovered the absurdity, the injustice, the cruelty, the turpitude of such a bargain. I can scarce think he understood by it, what it certainly means, and necessarily implies, that the worst Surgeons in Edinburgh, indiscriminately with the best, were in their turn to officiate as Surgeons to the Infirmary ; and this either for so short a time as to make it impossible for them to acquire any considerable improvement, or if for a longer time, so that they might improve a little, then with the certainty that they could never again act as Surgeons to the Hospital.

Supposing him to be perfectly convinced, that at the time when the bargain in question was made (1738) all the members of the corporation of Surgeons were equally and perfectly qualified to act as Surgeons to the Royal Infirmary ; supposing, further, that he is equally convinced that the case is just the same with all the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons at present ; it is surely impossible that he, or that any man in his right wits, can believe that this will always be the case.

If all the present Fellows of that College were removed to a better world, their places would soon be filled by at least an equal,
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probably a greater number of gentlemen of the same profession: and whether this happens in half an hour, or in half a century, it is the same for my argument: happen it must, sooner or later. Sooner or later, all the present performers must quit the stage, and fifty, an hundred, two hundred others, will come upon it. Of these yet unheard of, yet unborn, Surgeons, some, probably four or five times as many as can ever be wanted for the duty of this Hospital, will be men of sense, and knowledge, and skill in every part of their profession, good operators, attentive, humane, and diligent in the discharge of every part of their duty, and withal, men of good tempers, and modest gentle manners, who live, or wish to live, on good terms with all their professional brethren; and ready to give the most candid and patient attention to the opinions and advice of their brethren with whom they meet in consultation. In short, they may be every thing that the Managers could reasonably expect, or wish, in Surgeons, for the good of the sick poor in the Hospital, or for themselves or their families if they needed the assistance of Surgeons at home. Such men will naturally obtain general esteem and confidence, and will deservedly rise to eminence in their profession. But it is *impossible* that *all* of them should be men of such talents, such qualifications, and such characters. It is just as absurd to expect such uniformity of merit among them, as it would be to expect that they should all be of the same stature, the same complexion, and the same features. The minds of men ever were, and ever will be, at least as various as their bodies. Of the many individuals, who in the course of this century are to become Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, some will be half mad, and others more than half stupid; some will be grossly ignorant of their profession, of which perhaps they may never have learned any more than just enough to enable them to *pass* at their examination; and even this little they may have learned by means of a Short Catechism, which
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they never understood, but only got by rote. Some smart lads may have had a good deal of knowledge just when they came out of their apprenticeships, nine tenths of which they may have forgotten in the course of five, ten, or twenty years, passed without study, and with little or no practice. Some may have excellent fingers and thumbs, but without brains enough to know when and how to use them; others may have brains enough, and these very good of their kind, who may be lamentably deficient in point of fingers and thumbs; some may be savages in their dispositions, and brutes in their manners; some may be very fine gentlemen, minutely acquainted with all the most fashionable cures for the fashionable distemper, and perhaps well qualified to treat any common case of that most important disorder, but withal of such general character, habits, and conduct, that no person in his senses would ever think of employing them for the cure of any other disease: Some, from real bad temper, or personal animosity, and rancorous malevolence, envy, and jealousy, others from mere vanity and arrogance, may live in a state of open warfare, or, what is worse, of secret enmity, with many or all of their professional brethren, seeking every opportunity to undermine them, to supplant them, to thwart them in their practice, to censure, expose, and misrepresent every thing that they say or do: Some may be drunk every evening with punch, and others every morning with brandy; and some may not be quite sober at noon.

If it were proposed to give to such undeserving members of the Royal College of Surgeons, exclusively, the right of attending and operating in the Hospital, expressly setting aside all the men of merit of their profession; all deliberate considerations of the injustice, the cruelty, and the atrocity of such a scheme, would be lost in the obvious thought of the extravagant insanity of which it would be regarded as a decisive proof. Yet, whatever is absurd, unjust, and cruel in it, is just as bad, on the plan of indiscriminate rotation, to those
 unfortunate

unfortunate patients who happen to be in the Hospital when such men attend in it, as if no others ever attended, and is in no degree compensated to such patients, by the undisputed merit of all the other members of the Royal College of Surgeons.

Yet such is the force of habit, and such the influence of plausible words, that all these strong considerations, obvious and undeniable as they are, seem to have completely escaped the notice of Mr Arrot, even when deliberately writing and printing on the subject.

Though he was not personally concerned in the transaction of 1738, nor (probably) in the violent and long dispute between the Managers and the Surgeons about it thirty years afterwards; and though, from his long standing and established character in his profession, he can have no private interest in preserving that odious system; he yet contends for it with great warmth and eloquence, only proposing some new modifications of it, the advantages of which modifications I have not the honour to understand.

He seems to think that there was something honourable, and generous, public-spirited, and benevolent to their brethren, in the conduct of those who forced the Managers of the Infirmary to make that cruel bargain; and with all the fire and all the pathetic eloquence of a Roman patriot, he exhorts his brethren of the present day manfully to contend to the utmost for their sacred rights. He has expressed, in plain and humble prose, what long since was better expressed in heroic verse;

*Remember, O my friends, the laws, the rights,
The generous plan of power, delivered down
From age to age by your renowned forefathers,
So dearly bought, the price of so much blood.
O let it never perish in your hands,
But piously transmit it to your children!*

I must acknowledge my obligations to Mr Arrot, for the trouble he has taken to set me right as to the particulars of what passed, and even as to the number of persons who were present, at that grand consultation of Surgeons in the Royal Infirmary, which I have mentioned in my Memorial, (Page 197, 198, 199.), in what Mr Arrot is pleased to call such ludicrous terms.

In the first place, I am obliged to him for thus vouching for me that there really was such a consultation; for I should not have been in the least surpris'd, if some wiseacres had taken it into their noble heads that the account which I gave of it was altogether a fiction of my own; just as some others, in their great wisdom, have been pleas'd to think of the account which I gave of our everlasting medical warfare; of the two hundred years war about bleeding from the one arm or the other in a pleurisy; of the furious dispute among the London Doctors about purging in the secondary fever of the small-pox; and of many other of our bitter disputes.

No men of sense can justly be blamed for being slow and unwilling to believe that any men not absolutely insane should ever have engaged or persevered in such absurd disputes, or should have conducted them in so absurd a manner. If only one half of what I have heard be true, some medical gentlemen, who ought to have known better, have fallen into that honourable mistake.

For the satisfaction of all such distrustful and ignorant readers, I beg leave to declare once for all, that every thing which, either in my former Memorial or in this, is stated as a matter of fact, is true, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. Of the justness of my observations and reasonings founded on those facts, every person is entitl'd, and is heartily welcome, to judge for himself. As to the particular controversies to which I here allude, if any gentleman, whether of the medical profession or not, has any further curiosity or distrust about them, and will apply to
me,

me, I engage to shew him complete authority for all that I have said of them, and to refer him to the original authors, in whom he will find the whole detail of that nonsense which I have mentioned but briefly, and in general terms. My account of it appears ludicrous, and to some people incredible, only because I have brought so many choice specimens together, and arranged them on a new plan, and in such a manner that they all tend strongly to illustrate one another, and to establish that general principle according to which they are arranged. This purpose they answer so well, that they almost appear to have been contrived expressly for it.

Mr Arrot is well qualified to vouch for the reality of that consultation, by much the most formidable that ever I witnessed; for he was present at it, and, what is curious, he was on my side, and the only person that was so. Both these circumstances I had either forgotten, or, more probably, had never known. The truth is, I came in upon them *in mediis rebus*, that is, when they were in the middle of their consultation, and my poor patient in the middle of them. Mr Arrot, however, cannot be mistaken as to his having been of the consultation, and having differed in opinion from all his brethren, and from Dr Monro, and having agreed with me—which is very flattering to me. I can vouch for the facts, that Dr Monro was there, and that he was against me, to my very great mortification; for, though I do not profess never to differ in opinion from Dr Monro, yet I am always sorry when it happens; and I have the vanity to think that it happens very seldom. But, till I read Mr Arrot's paper, I never knew, nor suspected, that Dr Monro's opinion had such weight or authority with the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, as to make them implicitly adopt his sentiments, or even agree with one another on any one point. On the contrary, from all that I had ever seen or heard, I should rather have expected from it the very opposite effect.

As Mr Arrot remembers so well that curious scene, I should beg of him, the first day that he has leisure, to step in to Archer's Hall, and look at the picture of Daniel in the den of lions, (which is an excellent copy of the famous picture by Rubens at Hamilton), and then say whether the likenesses be not very striking, I mean particularly the likenesses in face and person between the prophet and the patient; for as to the likenesses between the individual lions and certain Surgeons who flourished here at the time of that consultation, (some fifteen or twenty years ago, I suppose), they certainly are much less perfect. But I have no doubt that a man of a quick eye, and some imagination, and competent knowledge of the physiognomies and *costume* of the Royal College of Surgeons at that time, may even yet find out some of them, and give to several grim members of that tremendous consultation "a local habitation and a name," with much plausibility of conjecture; it being understood always as a fixed general principle, that the lionesses, who have no mane, represent the *crops*, while the male lions, with their majestic manes, very properly represent the graver and more awful members of the Royal College of Surgeons, who wore long hair or great wigs.

It happens, however, somewhat unaccountably, that while we agree perfectly as to the general facts, that there was such a consultation, and with such a result as I have mentioned; nay, while we agree as to some of the more minute particulars of it, we yet differ materially as to the number of Surgeons who were present. Mr Arrot says, that, "to the best of his recollection, the persons present amounted to twelve or fourteen." To the best of my remembrance and judgment, I should rather think there had been twelve or fourteen persons between the door and the middle of the room, just opposite to the fire-place, farther than which I did not penetrate. But even to get so far I was obliged to squeeze and shuffle

shuffle through the crowd; and so far as I could see, by faint candle-light, the inner part of the room, including both the corner directly opposite, and the one diagonally opposite to the door, appeared equally crowded. I am sure there were several faces there the names of which I did not know, and which I was not accustomed to see there, and probably had never seen before. Then Mr Arrot should consider, that twelve or fourteen persons do not give the appearance of a crowd, and, in fact, are no uncommon number in that room. Though probably I have not been quite so often as he has been in that consulting room, yet I am sure I have been in it more than two thousand times, often enough, I presume, to know tolerably well what is, or rather what was, the usual complement of persons in it. The two ordinary physicians, with each his clerk, the clinical professor, with his two clerks, the apothecary or his assistant, or perhaps both, attending with their reports, one or two, or perhaps more, military surgeons (garrison or regimental) come to enquire about their men, the ordinary surgeon, and his assistant, and his clerk (or house-surgeon), and a snug little consultation of only three or four other Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, such as used often to assemble, without any particular summons, just to consult about the weather, and the news, medical or political, and the state of the nation, according to my arithmetic, make fully twelve or fourteen persons; and such a number, I think, could scarce have appeared to me any way extraordinary. On occasions when a consultation, even an ordinary one, was summoned, I am pretty sure that I have seen at least twelve or fourteen Surgeons in the consulting room, and that this was not at all extraordinary. But the consultation in question was called as a very extraordinary one, as appears by Dr Monro having been summoned to it, and by its being known in a few hours to so great a number of students. It was understood, by mistake, in consequence of some impropriety of expression in me or my clerk, to be a consultation on a most extraordinary

ordinary and urgent case, which could admit of no delay, as appeared by its being held in the evening by candle-light; and I believed at that time, and am still very much inclined to believe, that all, or almost all, who had a right to be in the consulting room, and all who, without any such right, had interest, or acquaintance, or dexterity enough to get themselves squeezed into it, were there bodily present.

These things I mention only to show that there was no wilful exaggeration or misrepresentation in the account which I gave of that adventure; for as I did not count the persons present, and doubt whether I could have counted them, I can have no pretensions to put my vague notion of a great crowd there assembled, in competition with Mr Arrot's more precise estimate of twelve or fourteen persons being present.

With respect to my general argument and conclusion, nay even with respect to that individual example and illustration, it is perfectly indifferent whether there were twelve *or* fourteen, or twelve *and* fourteen, or twelve times fourteen persons present at that memorable consultation. It certainly was a numerous one; the result of it was "a very harmless but insignificant prescription;" and the patient died accordingly.

Mr Arrot most judiciously observes, "I should account it very bad logic to conclude, that majorities must always be wrong, because I have sometimes happened to be in a minority." This is unquestionably right; but I do not think him equally right or equally fortunate in another observation or maxim, which he has expressed in the preceding part of the same sentence, in these words; "I am satisfied that in the multitude of *counsel* there is *wisdom*." I should scarce have understood to what he alluded, if I had not occasionally heard several other persons quote the same unlucky maxim, and most heretically pretend that Solomon, the wisest of men, was the author of it. But he was too wise a man, and too well acquainted

quainted with mankind, and with the folly of a vast majority of them, ever to have entertained such an opinion.

As a small acknowledgment for the kindness which Mr Arrot has shewn to me, I shall beg leave to set him right on that important point. I do not mean to insinuate, that he has wilfully misrepresented the text of scripture, in order to favour those multitudinous and ill-afforded consultations of Surgeons which I reprobate, and for which he contends; nor yet that he has presumptuously endeavoured to improve on the wisdom of Solomon. But as that heterodox reading of an important text is likely to have very bad consequences, and, far from being peculiar to Mr Arrot, is but too common among many well-meaning people, I suspect that their mistake proceeds from their being all provided with some erroneous edition of the Bible, probably the very one which contained the unlucky commandment, "Thou *shalt* commit adultery," instead of the genuine reading, "Thou shalt *not* commit adultery." That erroneous edition of the Bible, I believe, was published in the time of Charles I. and has been in great request ever since, especially among people of fashion. To this circumstance Mr Addison, who certainly was a competent judge of the subject, attributes the alarming frequency of conjugal infidelity among them in his time; and therefore exhorts them to provide themselves with a correct edition of the Bible, as I now most earnestly exhort Mr Arrot to do. When he has provided himself accordingly, or even has got a correct edition of the Proverbs of Solomon, which may be had separately, he may read the latter part of the sixth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of them, and he will soon be convinced that Solomon's maxim, of the truth and justness of which there can be no doubt, was, that "In the multitude of *counsellors* there is *safety*."

The meaning of the maxim is plain. If a multitude of counsellors, or the majority of them, shall chance to agree in what is right, there is safety to all concerned; to those who consult together, and to those

those about whom they consult ; and, by the courtesy of England, and of most other countries, the counsellors, in such cases, though perhaps very undeservedly, will have the credit of wisdom. But, on the other hand, if the multitude of counsellors, unanimously, or by a majority, go wrong in their advice, which is always possible, and generally probable, forasmuch as wise men are very seldom the majority of any multitude, and fools are always the most noisy, most petulant, and most obstinate, the person about whom they consult may see to himself as he best can ; all his counsellors, at least, are perfectly safe, for no one of them can reasonably be blamed or punished for the judgment and counsel of the rest.

On this undeniable principle, which, however, it appears that Mr Arrot did not understand, when a General has no stomach for fighting, and apprehends some danger of being cashiered at least, if not something worse, if he do not obey his orders, he calls a council of war, the more numerous the better. The multitude of counsellors, of course, determines unanimously that a living dog is better than a dead lion, which, being the opinion of Solomon, is probably a wise one ; but be it wise or foolish, the General and his multitude of counsellors are just as safe as if they had been dining with my Lord Mayor, or dancing at court.

Our Sovereign has the good fortune to have more than an hundred privy counsellors, of whose wisdom there can be no doubt. There is also perfect safety in that number of counsellors ; for in general he consults with very few of them, perhaps six or seven at the utmost ; and when a greater number of them is consulted, it is understood to be done, not for the sake of greater wisdom, but purely for the sake of that greater safety which nothing but a multitude of counsellors can insure.

The only King, or I believe I may say the only person, King or Subject, that ever I heard of, who contrived to find not only safety but very solid advantage to himself in a multitude of counsellors, and
also

also uniform wisdom in them, was FREDERICK the Great, King of Prussia. He was indeed a very extraordinary man, and though not just a second Solomon, certainly a very wise prince; as plainly appeared by the way in which he selected his privy counsellors, and by the use which he made of them. It is said he had more privy counsellors (Conseillers d'Etat) than any Sovereign in Europe, perhaps more than all of them put together: at least it was not his fault if he had not; for he made every body that chose one of his privy counsellors; I mean, every body that chose to pay for it; and he took care that no body should have that honour without paying swingingly for it. Of course, he had complete evidence of the vast wisdom, and the perfect equality of wisdom, of all his privy counsellors; and as to his own safety among such a multitude of counsellors, in addition to that security which resulted from their uniform wisdom, he took a still more decisive precaution; he never consulted any of them, so that it was literally impossible for them to do him any harm. But he had their money, which was just what he wanted; and they had *otium cum dignitate*, which was all that they wanted, or that they were fit for; so every body was pleased. Then, one evident advantage of this admirable system was, that five hundred of the greatest blockheads that ever Germany produced would have served his purpose just as well, and been really as good privy counsellors to him, as five hundred of the greatest statesmen and orators that ever puzzled their brains, or strained their throats, in the neighbourhood of Westminster Hall.

Solomon himself, if he had lived to see such a King, and such a privy council, would have acknowledged for once that there was something new under the sun; and that, in one case at least, in the multitude of counsellors there was wisdom, as well as safety.

If all the host of Surgeons that Edinburgh, or Scotland, or Europe contains, were ambitious of the honourable title of Surgeons to this Infirmary, and were so wise and liberal as to pay but ten guineas

each for their patents, and were discreet enough to be content with the honour, and not to insist on coming there to consult, and debate, and harangue, and dispute, and operate, and criticise; and were humane enough not to insist on doing mischief where they could do no good, and to leave the business to a few of their number, selected by the Managers for that purpose; they should all have my hearty vote for being Surgeons to the Royal Infirmary, from the day of their baptism to that of their death. But as long as they all, young and old, wise and foolish, drunk and sober, good, bad, and indifferent, insist upon attending, each in his turn, to have his cut, and all to join in consultation, and on such occasions to be taken by tale not by weight, (*numerandi non ponderandi*), and while the Managers individually could not without horror think of such a tremendous multitude of counsellors for themselves and their families, I must continue to think that the Managers can have no excuse, and are really guilty of a breach of trust, if they do not exert themselves to the utmost, in order to avert so horrible a calamity from the sick poor who are entrusted to their care.

I have no doubt that Frederick the Great would with less fear have led his troops in person to the attack in twenty pitched battles, than he would have trusted his royal person to a consultation of twenty, or even twelve or fourteen Surgeons. I doubt whether Solomon himself would have had courage to venture himself in such a multitude of such counsellors. Though he was not so great a soldier, he was a bolder man than Frederick, as appears by his having ventured on seven hundred wives, while Frederick would scarce venture on one; and I must own I regard Solomon's conduct in that respect as a proof rather of his high courage than of his superior wisdom. But no body surely ever heard of his having entrusted his person to a consultation of even the seventieth part of seven hundred Surgeons; nor do I believe that he could have entertained such an irrational thought, even in the delirium of a fever.

If ever such a multitude of terrible counsellors was assembled about him, I should think it must have been done, without his knowledge, by one of his wives, who being tired of the seven hundredth part of a husband, had tried that expedient, a very fair and promising one I must confess, to get rid of it.

To Mr Arrot's unlucky mistake about that important text which I have thus endeavoured to explain and illustrate, not to any malevolent intention towards my honoured preceptor and colleague, I must attribute his strange violation of the genuine maxim of Solomon, and the unwarrantable, perhaps even injurious freedom, that he has used with the name of DR MONRO. I knew, as well as Mr Arrot did, that Dr Monroe was of that consultation, and that he differed in opinion from me; but I never should have dreamed of mentioning these things. It is contrary to the very spirit and purpose of a consultation to make any individual answerable for the result of it, as in this case he has most unjustifiably, I mean without necessity and without excuse, done with respect to Dr Monroe.

What Dr Monroe may say to it I know not: probably little or nothing. But I know well what DR CULLEN would have said if it had happened to him; at least what he used to say when things went wrong, as, for instance, when a medicine came up that should have gone down, or a patient grew worse when he should have grown better, or died when he should have recovered, and, when the novices wondered and lamented, or pretended to wonder and lament: on such occasions, Dr Cullen, firm as Cato, contented himself with saying, "*Have we not seen Pharsalia?*"

Since the name of Dr Monroe has thus, by Mr Arrot, been mentioned in this discussion, unnecessarily and improperly as I think, it is right to say explicitly, that though I had the misfortune to differ in opinion from him in that case, and perhaps have done so in a few, I trust a very few, others; yet if I were myself dangerously ill, I should be happy to have his professional assistance, in preference to

that of any Physician in the world ; of which, I believe, he has had complete evidence long ago. If there was any peculiar difficulty in my case, I should be very glad to have a consultation of two or three Doctors *Monro*, if so many could be found, but not one more, if they were more plenty than Herrings. A consultation of thirty or forty, nay of twelve or fourteen Doctors *Monro*, would be too great happiness for me, even if I had the Plague. One such Doctor, I am sure, would pay all possible attention to the case of his patient, and probably would do for him all that could be done ; but if he was at a loss what to do, or distrusted his own judgment with respect to the employing of a precarious or dangerous remedy, the advice and assistance of one or two other such Doctors would be all that he or his patient could wish, with a view either to confirm his opinion if it was right, or correct it if it was wrong. And two or three such men might reasonably be expected to attend faithfully to the state of their patient, to be warmly interested in his welfare, and even to think themselves responsible for the management of him. But none of these things can rationally be expected in a great assembly or consultation, even of such men. Then I am sure that Dr *Monro* is too wise and good a man ever to dispute or quarrel with himself ; and I should expect even that two or three such men in consultation might agree like brethren. I do not know so well what might happen in a congregation of forty such men, especially if they had the misfortune to be united in one corporation of Physicians or Surgeons, and, of course, were made rivals for fame and fortune, perhaps obliged to strive and scramble for their daily bread ; and I know well what certainly would happen in a promiscuous assembly of forty ordinary men, Physicians or Surgeons, of whom probably thirty taken together might not have the thirtieth part of Dr *Monro*'s knowledge, understanding, and worth ; while yet each of the thirty might be perfectly satisfied with himself, and equally convinced of the ignorance, the folly, and the knavery of the majority

jority of his brethren, and all of them exasperated to the utmost by implacable corporation and professional disputes.

Whenever the Managers of the Infirmary permit or appoint for the sick poor in the Hospital such numerous and ill-assorted consultations, as neither the rich and great, who can well afford to have whatever is best for them ; nor Physicians and Surgeons, who, without expence, may have in that respect whatever they wish ; nor they, if sick themselves, would chuse to have, or could think of without horror, they may be sure that they are doing wrong.

The well known maxim of a Grecian sage is fairly applicable on this as on every occasion : We ought not to seek what is greatest, not even in rank or fortune, but what is best ; what is most suitable to us. If a wise and good man had occasion to be clothed himself, or charitably to clothe a poor man, he would hardly think of calling a consultation of a great multitude of Tailors ; and still less, I presume, would he desire a whole Royal College of Tailors to co-operate in making, either for himself or for the poor man, the largest pair of breeches that they could contrive to make by their united labours. On many occasions, so vast a pair of breeches would be worse than none ; and, on all occasions, the breeches that fitted them best, would be the best for those who had occasion to wear them.

REMARKS on MR JOHN BELL's *Answer for the Junior Members of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh to my Memorial ; for which Answer he received the Thanks of that Royal College.*

SCARCE had I written one half of the preceding observations on Mr Arrot's Remarks, when I had the pleasure of hearing (and a very great pleasure it was to me, far greater even than what I had just before received from perusing Mr John Bell's most admirable
and

and inimitable pamphlet) that he had received, as I am sure he well deserved, the solemn thanks of the Royal College of Surgeons for that inestimable work. Inestimable it really was to me; for it was all that I wanted or wished, and much more than I could have expected from any Member of that learned College, to confirm and illustrate, to the full conviction of the Managers and of the public, every thing that I had urged in my Memorial. It was much more acceptable, and more valuable to me, than a vote of thanks to myself, or than a Diploma of Honorary Member, unanimously conferred on me by that Royal College, would have been. It was infinitely better for my purpose, than any thing that I could have imagined, or would have written, if such things had been suggested to me by men of superior genius; and if Mr John Bell had put his own pen into my hand, and in his own name and that of his brethren, had desired me to write whatever I pleased as an answer for them to my argument.

To Mr John Bell, personally and privately, I have already expressed my gratitude for the entertainment and edification which his work has afforded me. And I now publicly and formally beg that he, and all his brethren who first employed him to write that Answer to my Memorial, and who have now, by their solemn vote of thanks to him, sanctioned it, and adopted it as their own, will accept my most humble and hearty thanks for the honour and favour which they have thus done me, and of which I shall now endeavour to prove myself not altogether unworthy.

They must not consider these expressions of gratitude on my part as mere words of course, and idle compliments; nor must they refer them entirely to the obvious principle, most happily and emphatically expressed by a popular writer, "That there are men whose praise is satire, and whose approbation is infamy." The severest censures of such men, of course, must be more than praise, and their foulest reproaches the most unequivocal and honourable testimonials

monials that they can bestow, and just as much to be desired as *laudari a laudato viro*.

Even in this view, their vote of thanks to Mr John Bell, implying that they approved, adopted, and sanctioned the sentiments expressed in his pamphlet, with respect to me and my Memorial, would no doubt have been highly gratifying to me. But many other considerations, still more weighty, contributed, along with that one, to enhance its value in my fight. Just as a bill of exchange, hardly negotiable on the credit of the drawer, when covered by proper indorsements, becomes as good and current as if it were payable to the Sterling Abraham Newland.

If no such public and honourable testimony of their approbation, esteem, and concurrent sentiments, had been bestowed by them on Mr John Bell, and his Answer to my Memorial; still worse, if they individually had all disavowed it, as what they never thought, and had never employed him to write for them, which at one time I had reason to fear would have been the case, I should have been placed in a very unpleasant and embarrassing situation. There are many things in it of which I earnestly wished to take notice, and to avail myself, because they appeared to me admirably suited to serve the cause which I had espoused; but I could not, without forfeiting the esteem and confidence of the Managers, and the good opinion of my best friends, have made any remarks on such a work, which so many of them had declared to me neither required nor deserved any notice from me.

I should soon have been told that I was an arrant Quixote, attacking a harmless Windmill by mistake for a terrible Giant. There would have been no end to the jokes and sarcasms that I must have brought on myself. But now that the enemy, for want (I presume) both of Generals and Engineers, has placed his whole force in that windmill, a most unmilitary and untenable post I should think, and from that post has valiantly attacked me on my strongest side, it cannot

cannot surely be thought Quixotism in me to take a view at least of his entrenchments and batteries, and to consider the plan and manner of his desperate attack.

To be attacked on one's strongest side, just in the place and in the manner that one would wish, is a wonderful and almost unexampled piece of good fortune. Any person who shall fairly consider it in this point of view, will probably have some notion of the pleasure I felt in reading Mr John Bell's pamphlet, and the still greater pleasure which I felt when I heard that he had received the thanks of the Royal College of Surgeons for that work. If not, let such a person consider what joy it would give to every friend of his country, to hear that the King of Spain and all his subjects had marched in a mass to attack Gibraltar by sea and land; or that the First Consul of France and all his myrmidons had fairly embarked in flat-bottomed boats, and failed to fight the Channel fleet and invade England, and he will understand perfectly the kind of pleasure to which I allude. Even in these hard times, JOHN BULL himself would rejoice to be so attacked by his worst enemies. Ruined as he is by the war, drowned in debt, pillaged with taxes, oppressed with grievances, pining (as usual) with apprehensions, tormented all day by excisemen, haunted all night by schedules of income-tax longer than his rent-roll, beset on all hands, devoured by his servants, threatened by his foes, bullied by his friends; a host of democrats and reformers, armed with pamphlets, pikes, daggers, and guillotines, in his front; myriads of volunteer infantry, with fixed bayonets, in his rear; vast clouds of yeomanry cavalry, sword in hand, ready to charge him on his right; mountains of volunteer artillery, with lighted portfires, just ready to open on his left; growling at the scarcity of belly-timber; not half relishing the proclamation, and the economy of eatables which it recommends; making endless wry faces at the nice pickled herrings which his sister PEG sends him up twice a-week, just by way of a whet; quite desperate

perate at the rigid economy of malt, and the shameful waste of river-water, which are now practised by the brewers ; seeing no prospect of any thing before him in this world but death and taxes, and doubtful which to take first ; even in the midst of all his calamities, JOHN BULL would chearfully put his hand once more in his almost empty pocket, and pay t'other fifty millions, just to have the pleasure of reading a Gazette Extraordinary, containing the account of those two attacks. The pamphlet of Mr John Bell, and the vote of thanks of the Royal College of Surgeons to him for it, were such an attack, and such a Gazette to me. Without metaphor or simile, I think it may be well understood, that to find Mr John Bell employing against me and my Memorial, and the majority of the Royal College of Surgeons approving, and, by their vote of thanks to him, formally sanctioning and adopting as their own, arguments which scarce needed refutation, assertions which certainly required no contradiction, and reproaches the most virulent, but withal hurtful and dishonourable only to their authors, could not fail to be gratifying to me. Such conduct, in the first place, was very sufficient proof that they could find nothing better, or more to the purpose, to say against me and my argument ; so that in this respect it was a kind of confirmation, really of more force than a formal acknowledgment, of the validity of all that I had advanced. But, in the second place, it completely removed those restraints which, from considerations of delicacy to them individually, and to their College as a body corporate, I had imposed on myself, in stating, for the satisfaction of the public, some of the many strong reasons that the Managers had for wishing to get rid of that cruel contract which gave indiscriminately to every Member of the College of Surgeons the right of attending by rotation in the Royal Infirmary. It not only gave me liberty, but strongly required of me, to state to the public at large some more of the evils necessarily resulting from that cruel system, and well known by experience to

the Managers, and to the Surgeons, but which I trusted it would have been unnecessary to have made more generally known.

Still, however, in addition to the sacred restraints of truth and justice, I hold myself bound in honour, and in duty, as a Manager of the Royal Infirmary, while I reprobate that fordid bargain which our predecessors made with the Surgeons, and give strong additional reasons for putting an end to the cruel system which has resulted from it, as I trust will soon be done, not to state any minute particulars, in such a manner as may point out any living individuals as blameable, or hurt their fame and fortune; and not to state even the general case in such a manner as to make them all, and their profession, and the Hospital itself, objects of horror to the public. This they have attempted, in my opinion with more zeal than prudence, to do with respect to the Clinical Professors, and their practice and lectures. But I consider the conduct of Mr John Bell and the Surgeons, on this point, as an example only, not as a pattern.

It is right, however, to warn them all, as I did Mr John Bell, privately and personally, before his answer to my Memorial was written, that if they be not very cautious, they may soon and effectually frustrate my purpose in that kind of reserve. Many of them must already know, and all of them, if they choose to take the trouble to enquire, may soon learn, from unquestionable authority, to what occurrences, and consequently to what individual Surgeons, I allude. If they will not keep the secret as they ought to do, I cannot help it; nor do I care; let them see to the consequences. Their indiscretion will not injure any man of merit among them, nor will it weaken, on the contrary, it will greatly confirm and illustrate, my argument: and if some of them shall fall into the pit which themselves have dug, I shall soon be comforted. *Nec lex ulla justior est, quam necis artificem arte perire sua.*

It is impossible that I should have an unfavourable opinion of their Profession; it is impossible that I should bear any ill-will to their College in its corporate capacity; it is most certain that I bear not the smallest ill-will to any individual among them; there is not one of them whom I should not be very sorry to hurt in person, fame, or fortune. But to their hateful bargain with the Managers of the Royal Infirmary in 1738,—to their promiscuous attendance and multitudinous consultations in it,—and to the arguments or declamation by which they still contend for that bargain, and that mode of attendance in the Hospital, I will give no quarter.

It was not, however, purely on the selfish principle of personal gratification to myself, nor yet from the consideration of the great service which it could not fail to do to my cause, that I had such pleasure in hearing of the vote of thanks of the Royal College of Surgeons to Mr John Bell: it was very much on his account; for till I heard of that well-judged and well-merited vote of thanks, “(Happy who thus have power to give, who thus with honour can receive),” I had reason to fear that Mr John Bell would have been placed in a most distressing, and not a very creditable situation, which, out of the regard I bear to him, I should have been heartily sorry for.

From the solemn resolution, and formal request of the Junior Members (that is to say, of *some* of the Junior Members) of the Royal College of Surgeons, to Mr John Bell, which he has very judiciously printed, and prefixed to his Pamphlet, it is plain that he was employed by them to write an answer to my Memorial. It is plain also that he wrote such an answer at their request. But it is not quite so plain what is to be understood by his own circular letter to them, which he has also printed and prefixed to his Pamphlet. In that letter, which is a pretty long one, there are some things hard to be understood; and many things which, without a key, or at least a good commentary, cannot be understood at all.

*Talibus ex adyto dictis Cumæa Sibylla
 Horrendas canit ambages, antroque remugit,
 Obscuris vera involvens : ea fræna furenti
 Concutit, et stimulos sub pectore vertit Apollo.*

Indeed the only thing which can be clearly understood or inferred from that letter is, that the Pamphlet to which it is prefixed, written by Mr John Bell, had not met with the approbation of the Royal College of Surgeons, and was actually printed without the sanction, perhaps contrary to the wishes, even of that party of the College in whose behalf it had been written. But I had no occasion to rely on such inferences from the obscure hints and verbose ambiguous expressions of that Sibylline letter. Several days before I ever heard of it, which indeed was not till after the pamphlet subjoined to it had been published, I was informed that several of that party of the Surgeons who opposed the change in the mode of their attendance in the Hospital for which I contend, had disclaimed all share or concern in Mr John Bell's *paullo post futurum* production, of which it was generally understood that he was actually in hard labour : and two or three days after he was safely delivered of it, I had the honour to receive a formal message, from one of the most eminent of his partisans, assuring me that he, the gentleman who sent me the message, had no concern in the Pamphlet.

On considering the various intimations of this kind, which, either directly or indirectly, I received soon before and soon after his Pamphlet appeared, it occurred to me, that his partisans were resolved to disavow Mr John Bell's Pamphlet, just out of spite to me, in order to deprive me of the pleasure and the advantage which they foresaw I must have, if they sanctioned it and adopted it as their own. For I could not suppose that so short a time as had elapsed between the publication of my Memorial, and that of his answer to it, should have dissolved the friendship of such men, a friend-
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ship founded on the most perfect confidence, and a thorough knowledge of one another's talents and virtues.

I thought it possible also that some of them, little acquainted with fine writing, and still less with that exquisite mode of reasoning which is generally practised by lawyers, to the great astonishment of their simple clients, had not perceived the plan and drift of his elaborate work, nor consequently understood the merit of it; or relished the joke, which he intended to practise on me.

They probably expected, in pure simplicity of heart, when he undertook to answer my Memorial for them, that he was gravely to proceed at once to refute the arguments which I had urged; just as a common barber would in a trice take off the most bristly beard that could come under his razor. But in this, supposing that it could have been done easily and without delay, there would have been no merit, and no joke at all.

Mr John Bell is a man of too great genius, and understands too well what he owes to himself and to his employers, as well as what the public expects of him, ever to have thought of proceeding in so mechanical and vulgar a manner on this grand occasion, the finest opportunity he ever had, or ever could expect or wish to have, of displaying to the best advantage his superior talents as an operator.

I soon discovered what kind of operation he intended to perform on me; for I once heard of its being successfully performed on a simple traveller, who having great occasion to be trimmed, sent for the barber of a village where he chanced to stop. The knight of the razor soon made his appearance, and, with the hand of a master, in a trice prepared a mountain of foaming suds whiter than Alpine snows; then, with most persevering diligence, lathered his patient's face as completely as the visage of Don Quixote was lathered by the fair Altisidora; then unfolded his shining blade, and strapped it well, with many a flourish; and at last applied it so effectually.

fectually, that in a few seconds he scraped off all the skin, leaving every hair on the chin of the ill-fated traveller as long and strong as it was before. This is justly considered as the very pink and perfection of masterly shaving, and, when well performed, never fails to excite the astonishment of the patient, and the admiration and applause of every beholder. Mr John Bell, to do him justice, has not spared his lather, nor his labour, nor his flourishes, and, if his razor had had any edge at all, I should certainly have been made a perfect raw head and bloody bones, my beard only, like an impenetrable *abbatis* or *chevaux de frize*, remaining untouched, and as formidable as ever. It might have been left purposely to the care of some vulgar operator, who knew nothing of the more sublime parts of his profession, and was fit only for such drudgery.

But, *in magnis voluisse sat est*: as it is not in mortals to command success, we must be content with deserving it. This the partisans of Mr John Bell seem at last, though somewhat late, to have discovered and felt. Though I cannot compliment them on the generosity of their conduct, I must own they have done him justice. To have withheld their thanks and praises would have been unjust, unkind, and ungrateful in the highest degree, after employing him in so ungracious and unprofitable a work. First to have used him as they say a monkey does a cat's paw in roasting chestnuts, and then to have driven him out, like a scape-goat, into the wilderness, loaded with the sins, and followed by the curses of a whole people, would have been a specimen of human nature worse than any we have yet seen, not excepting even the conduct of Mess. Kennedy and Co. Members of the Corporation of Surgeons in Edinburgh, more than sixty years ago. But now, by their just and candid behaviour to Mr John Bell, in voting their thanks and praises for his work, perfect esteem, and confidence, and friendship, are preserved among them: and long may they continue.

*Felices ter et amplius
Quos irrupta tenet copula : nec malis
Divulsus querimoniis,
Suprema citius solvet amor die.*

It is proper also to mention, in justice to Mr John Bell, that he appears in this cause not only rather as an advocate than as a party, but even as an advocate against his better judgment, and almost against his conscience. I mean, that the sentiments which he has expressed so fully and vehemently with respect to me, and with respect to the Royal College of Surgeons as a body, are diametrically opposite to those which he entertained, and had openly avowed, and strongly expressed, a short time before ; and, with respect to myself, a short time after also, nay even at the time, and in the very act of writing that violent Philippic against me, which he has been pleased to call an Answer to my Memorial.

Of the last of these assertions any person who has got a copy of his Pamphlet may have complete proof in a moment. Such a person, on perusing it, will perceive, that after reviling me for more than an hundred pages of small print, royal octavo, in a style equal or superior to any clapper-clawing that ever was performed in the Royal College of Surgeons ; after reproaching me with every thing that is bad, ignorance, falsehood, malevolence, cruelty, hypocrisy ; after representing me as an undutiful, unnatural, degenerate son, and an unworthy, ungrateful scholar, who endeavoured, by the foulest means, to blast the character of my deceased instructor and colleague, Mr John Bell gravely declares, (page 10, sect. 3.)

“ It is time for us to say, in favour of one whose conduct we cannot but despise, that though he may have a light and giddy head, we are sure he has an honest heart.” Then he proceeds for full forty pages more reviling me as bitterly as he had done in the first hundred pages of his Pamphlet.

It is evidently impossible that any man expressing his own real sentiments should have fallen into such extravagant inconsistencies and contradictions. No man who knows what an honest heart is, can believe that I have such a heart, (which Mr John Bell says he is sure of), and at the same time believe me to be such a horrible monster as he represents me. What then must we conceive his real opinion of me to have been at the time when he was writing that Philippic against me? for at present I am not disposed to admit that he literally does not know what an honest heart is, though very probably, for an hundred and fifty pages, he may never once have thought of it.

It seems to me most probable that his own opinion of me at that time was just the same that it had been before, and was immediately after, as most amply expressed by himself, when he was free from every restraint, and not acting either as the leader, or the advocate, or the tool of a party.

To the best of my knowledge, in the last twenty years of my life, no one Member of the Royal College of Surgeons, nor all of them put together, have said so many kind and flattering things to me, and of me, as Mr John Bell has said.

My library is adorned with copies of his books on anatomy and surgery, splendidly bound, presented to me by the author, and either bearing inscriptions, or accompanied by letters expressing his esteem and respect for me. He has done me the honour to mention me in the most flattering manner in one of his immortal works, to which his name is not prefixed, but which, I believe, he never disavowed, and now, if I understand him right, fairly acknowledges as his own; indeed, from its inveterate family-likeness, there could be no doubt about its parentage. I have had the pleasure of hearing, on many occasions, from several different persons, that he spoke of me *vivá voce* in the same favourable manner. In short, without vanity, I believe that few men, if any, of my profession,
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or of any profession, had the good fortune to possess a larger share of his esteem and good-will than myself; and I doubt much whether any person ever yet enjoyed that good fortune nearly so long as I have done.

Even just after my Memorial was distributed, and before Mr John Bell had been tempted by the Foe of mankind to "follow a multitude to do evil," he did me the honour to address to me a very long card on the subject of my Memorial, expressing sentiments, and an avowed resolution with respect to his future conduct in the business, which I thought, and still think, do him very great credit. Accordingly, in my answer to that card, I endeavoured with all my might to confirm those good sentiments in him; and as I perceived, from some hints in his card, that there was a risk of my Paper being misunderstood or misrepresented, I took much pains to obviate all such mistakes, real or pretended, with respect to it. I am sure I said much more than enough to have convinced him, or any person not absolutely determined not to be convinced, (which is always the case with party-men), that my Memorial was a perfectly harmless and benevolent work, written in the discharge of my public duty and trust.

But I think it best to let our correspondence speak for itself. Part of his share of it does him very great honour, by shewing what his own sentiments and intentions were; and the other part of his share of it shews how he was prevailed on to change those just sentiments, and depart from his original good resolution. My share of the correspondence will at least shew what pains I took to keep him or to set him right, and to prevent such an explosion as we have lately seen.

N^o I.

MR BELL presents compliments to Dr Gregory; has received an address from Dr Gregory to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, on a subject in which it would be affectation in Mr Bell to say he had not a very particular interest.

From the moment in which Mr Bell heard of this Address, he resolved to take no selfish step which might interrupt any charitable purpose, or give trouble to a set of gentlemen who have now to conduct a business peculiarly difficult and delicate, where the most superficial observer may foresee a contention of interests and passions very afflicting to the Managers, who, when a question of this nature is brought before them, must decide. Mr Bell from the first resolved to wait the decision of the Managers, which he has no doubt will be honourable and impartial, tending only to the public good.

On every occasion of this nature, a man who is unavoidably interested must feel a degree of uneasiness till he have resolved what line of conduct to pursue. Mr Bell has reflected on this subject of debate with no small anxiety, and finds reason to be contented with the resolution he at first formed, and to abide by it, as most modest and becoming a gentleman, and as especially proper in a professional man, who should seek promotion and success in the world rather by his honest diligence and private labours, than by cabal and solicitation. In this resolved state of mind, he was naturally surprised, and somewhat offended, to hear it reported that he was expected to answer Dr Gregory's Memorial; and it is to explain his sentiments on this subject that he troubles Dr Gregory with this long card.

Mr Bell has not opened this Address. He cannot suppose it possible for Dr Gregory to mix any private considerations with a public question so important as this; and Mr Bell is persuaded, that what-

ever

ever Dr Gregory may have said of the conduct of one particular department in the Royal Infirmary, he will never forsake so far the dignity of his station as to say any thing insulting to the profession, or dangerous to any individual. Such things could never enter into a Memorial addressed by a man of talents to a respectable and public body. Mr Bell having no personal fear, can the more freely say to Dr Gregory, that, from his former conduct, Mr Bell has reason to expect every thing liberal, fair, and honourable.

Mr Bell takes this opportunity of assuring Dr Gregory, that whatever may be the reports of idle or busy people, he can imagine no possible motive, on his part, for answering a Memorial which has in view an object so charitable and praise-worthy as that of conducting to the best advantage the only Hospital in this great city. Nothing could engage Mr Bell in any public dispute, nor be an apology to himself for writing any pamphlet or memorial, except the sincere hope of being useful, or the necessary duty of self-defence. And if it were possible that, in regard to the administration of the Royal Infirmary, and his public duties there, he were forced to reply to any public charge, it must be of a nature which would involve his reputation, and very existence as a professional man. But Dr Gregory is too sensible of all this to do any thing ungenerous ; and Mr Bell is too seriously impressed with the serious consequences of any such imputation, either to disregard the slightest accusation, or to enter unpremeditatedly or rashly upon a public vindication. The step which is to give a colour to a man's future life and reputation, which is to enlarge or take away his opportunities of being useful in his public profession, may well admit of deliberate reflection.

Mr Bell will not pay Dr Gregory so poor a compliment as to neglect reading what he is pleased to publish ; but, without being wanting in every proper and decent attention to his character, station, and future expectations in life, he will wait composedly the

- × issue of this business, by which alone the design of this Address can be judged of. If Dr Gregory have in this business nothing but the interests of humanity in view, his Memorial will contain in it
- × nothing of partiality or party-spirit, and it must carry along with it the approbation of every good and well-disposed man.

Nº 9. *George's Street.*

Nº II.

Lanerk, Thursday Evening, 14th August 1800.

DEAR SIR,

I was gone from Edinburgh before your card came to my house. It was sent after me. It is so interesting to me, and in my opinion so honourable to yourself, that I have been anxious to answer it fully, and in the way that I think will be most completely satisfactory to you and all your professional brethren. This has insensibly led me into some pretty long discussions, so that my letter, begun four days ago at Dumfries House, is not yet finished, though in my clumsy hand-writing it looks already almost like a little Memorial. I must be back in Edinburgh on Sunday, or Monday morning at farthest; then, or sooner, if I can get it finished sooner, my letter shall wait on you. In the mean time, I give you this intimation, that you may not suppose, from my delay in answering your card, that I am insensible or unworthy of those expressions of esteem which it contains, or of the confidence which you have had the goodness to put in me.

I have much pleasure in thinking that a great part of my letter must already be anticipated by your own perusal of my Memorial; and, in particular, that you must have found it just the reverse of what you had heard surmised with respect to any supposed insults
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on your profession. But I can easily guess how an imperfect or superficial reading of it may have led to that mistake.

I am your obliged and most obedient servant,

J. GREGORY.

To Mr John Bell, Surgeon in Edinburgh.

Nº III.

MR BELL presents compliments to Dr Gregory ; has received the Doctor's card, and also the papers which he had the politeness to promise, and the good humour to describe as a little Memorial.

No one would be more happy than Mr Bell to allow Dr Gregory all possible applause for the humane motives which first disposed him to enter upon this business, and for his generous intentions all along ; but, most unhappily, Dr Gregory has, in the fervour of composition, or in the hurry of important duties, partly sacrificed to this important object, said many things which the Doctor's natural candour will incline him to acknowledge are unjustly severe, and far from being useful to his cause.

The young Surgeons, in danger of being excluded from those duties which they believed they were employed in performing with humanity, diligence, and at least the ordinary degree of skill, and finding in Dr Gregory's Memorial nothing of that respect or delicacy which their common profession and the inseparable character of gentlemen entitled them to expect, have resolved to answer Dr Gregory's Memorial, and have requested Mr Bell to take his share
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in the labour.

Mr Bell would think himself very unworthy of the honourable service they have assigned him, of conveying their sentiments to the
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Managers of the Royal Infirmary, if he did not partake of their feelings.

feelings. Yet he hopes to perform his appointed task with that
 X delicacy towards Dr Gregory and his profession which, it is to be
 lamented, was quite forgotten when Surgery and Surgeons were
 made the public jest of every light head and unfeeling heart; and
 X with that feriousness also which becomes young men anxious about
 their professional reputation, and appealing to a body of men so
 respectable and disinterested as the Managers of the Royal Infir-
 mary. But Dr Gregory knows how to make allowance for what-
 ever expressions may chance to be used in a pamphlet, not of ag-
 gression, nor of recrimination even, but of reply merely. Personal
 invective is by no means the most persuasive manner of writing, it
 X is a thriftless trade, “ C’est un mechant métier que celui de
 “ médire.”

This arrangement, which has taken place since Dr Gregory left town, Mr Bell would be sorry to have him a moment unacquainted with. And, without the rudeness of returning the papers designed for Mr Bell as a private gentleman, he hopes Dr Gregory will have the goodness to reflect on the peculiar delicacies of his situation, and will judge for him, whether it were at all proper that he should touch the seals of those papers. He is sorry that he should have even a doubt about the propriety of reading any papers which Dr Gregory has been so condescending as to write on the occasion.

Nº 9. *George's Street, Tuesday Evening.*

Nº IV.

St Andrew's Square, Wednesday Morning, 20th August 1800.

DEAR SIR,

I LOSE not a moment to acknowledge the receipt of your second very polite card.

I am very sensible of the liberality and delicacy of your conduct to me, in offering to return me the papers which I sent you yesterday without touching the seals of them ; but you must be equally sensible, that for me to accept that very handsome offer on your part would be altogether wrong. It would expose me to the most unfavourable suspicions ; such as I cannot chuse to incur, even though knowing them to be unjust, I cannot fear them.

I think it right to preclude even the possibility of such suspicions ; the more so as I understand, from some hints which you kindly gave me in your former card, that some doubts were entertained about the propriety of my conduct, and even some suspicions of the purity of my motives in printing the Memorial which you have seen.

There is nothing in the papers, which at present you have in your possession with the seals unbroken, but what you have a right to know, and what I should wish you to know, even though you are now to be my opponent instead of my friend and ally, as, from your former card, I hoped to have found you. But I do not blame you for changing your mind. It is commonly said that second thoughts are best ; I hope yours will be so. I am sure I shall have much pleasure and edification in reading any answer to my Memorial which is written wholly or partly by you.

There is nothing in my written papers which you received yesterday but what you are welcome to shew to any of your friends or professional brethren, especially now that they have resolved to answer my printed paper. I should even wish you to shew my written paper to them all. There are some things in it which it may be of real consequence to them to know, even with a view to answer my Memorial. But observe, those papers were written hastily and by starts, chiefly at inns on my return to Edinburgh ; and that you have them as they were first written, with all, or almost all their errors and inaccuracies on their head ; they were
written

written with the negligence and freedom of one gentleman writing privately and confidentially to another ; so I protest against all remarks on grammatical or verbal inaccuracies, words wanting, or twice written, or misplaced or mis-spelled, &c. As to the substance of what is written, you and your friends are most heartily welcome to use all manner of freedom ; just as much as with my printed paper.

Though we are now to be opponents, I see no reason why we should be enemies ; may I therefore beg a favour of you and your brethren ? If you have no good reason to the contrary, I wish you would print your answer in quarto, and of the same size with my Memorial, that they may be conveniently bound up together ; and if ever I have occasion to reply to you, I shall do the same.

I am, dear Sir, your obliged and most obedient servant,

J. GREGORY.

Mr John Bell's obliging offer of sending me back my papers with the seal untouched would have completely frustrated my purpose in writing them ; and if I had accepted his offer, it would not have answered the purpose for which he made it. The papers in question, being too bulky to be *folded*, were *rolled* up, and the cover of the roll, to the best of my remembrance, was sealed at the side only ; so that the inclosed papers might easily have been taken out at either end of the cover, and might have been read by fifty people, and might have been replaced *in statu quo*, without ever touching the seal.

Of the copy of that letter which I have kept, but a very small part was written by myself ; the whole of it was written very hastily ; and no part of it was compared with the original. On reading it over, with a view to print it, I find that several words are
a wanting,

a wanting, others misplaced, and others mistaken. These accidental errors I have endeavoured to correct in printing it, to the best of my remembrance. If there be, in the following copy of it, any deviation from the original in the hands of Mr John Bell, it is not intended, and it can be of no consequence.

N^o V.

DEAR SIR,

I employ the first hour I could command to answer your very interesting card. I trust you know already that I was gone out of town before you sent it to my house. If I had been at home when it came to my house I should have answered it immediately, and should have lost no time in communicating it to the several Managers of the Royal Infirmary, to whom I am sure it will give, as it has given to me, very great pleasure. I shall not fail to communicate it to them as soon as I return to Edinburgh, which, unless I am prevented by some unforeseen accident, will be in a week from this time.

This, independently of the gratification which I know it will be to all of them, I should think it my duty to do in justice to you. I am heartily glad that you have been the first to express so openly and so strongly those just and liberal sentiments which your card to me contains, and which I must take the liberty to say, do you very great credit.

Do not suppose from this that I am surpris'd at your acting wisely and honourably on this occasion, or that I expected you to have acted otherwise. You will have seen before this time, by my Memorial itself, that I had little or no apprehension of meeting with any different sentiments or conduct from any individual of your

College. My fears were limited to the chance, and that a very small one, of your College as a body-corporate acting on principles very different from those which any gentleman acting for himself personally could avow, or even be supposed to entertain.

I am sensible that it was not altogether civil in me, or respectful to your College, to state such a supposition with respect to its conduct even in its corporate capacity. But none of you individually, nor your College in general, can seriously take amiss my conduct in that respect, if you but do me the justice to observe, that the unfavourable supposition to which I allude was essential to my argument, not as a thing to be believed, but only to be stated and considered; that I stated it with the greatest diffidence, and with a proper apology for the liberty I took; and further, if you consider that those very illiberal sentiments which I could not believe any of you entertained at present, had been entertained and avowed as the principles of action of many of your College little more than sixty years ago; and as I have strong reason to suspect much more lately, when, for two, or three, or four years together, the mode of attendance of the Surgeons in the Infirmary was a subject of keen contest between your College and the Managers.

I am sure you will have great pleasure in observing the contrast between the liberal and honourable sentiments so well expressed in your card to me, and those so much the opposite of them, that I can find no decent words to express them, which you see avowed in the Surgeons Memorial of 1737. I presume that wonderful production was as new, and if not too disgusting, would be as entertaining to you as I have hitherto found it to all your brethren with whom I have conversed about it.—I *presume*, for, not having seen the particulars in our minutes, I cannot pronounce with certainty, that you will have equal pleasure, and equal cause for honest pride and self-approbation, when you compare the sentiments expressed in your card to me, with those which influenced the Surgeons in
their

their long contest with the Managers between thirty and thirty-five years ago, the particulars of which you will find in the minutes of your own College.

I do not wonder that at first, and especially before you read my paper, you should think, that “ the most superficial observer may “ foresee a contention of interests and passions very afflicting to the “ Managers.” I confess I thought so myself at first : but on considering the subject more deeply, I found strong reasons to hope more favourably of the result of the discussion ; as, I trust, you will do very soon. Certainly your card to me has greatly strengthened these hopes.

As you have dealt so liberally and so frankly with me on this subject, I shall be as frank with you, and tell you plainly my view of it, and my reasons for thinking that your own very honourable conduct, and those sentiments which you have expressed in your card to me, will have a great and happy influence in the business. You will, I hope, in the first place, excuse me when I take the liberty to tell you, that I do not think you sufficiently cool or impartial to judge fairly what the sentiments and conduct of many of your professional brethren will be on this occasion : I mean, of those especially from whom you have differed in professional and corporation disputes.

Of the particulars and even the subjects of these disputes, I know little or nothing, and I do not wish to know any thing ; for I am not qualified to judge of them, and I have no right and no wish to interfere in them. But I have so often heard that there are many keen disputes in your College, and that you take a very active part in them, that I can have no doubt of either of these facts. On the same general and vague *authority*, (if such it may be called), I understand that you, by your talents and activity, have acquired a great ascendancy among your professional brethren, and are regarded as the great leader of one party among them.

You may judge how strictly I have adhered to my avowed principle, never to meddle with any of your professional or corporation disputes, when I assure you most solemnly, that I do not know, nor can I guess, who is the leader of the opposite party in your College. As little do I know who and who are together on either side, or what are the subjects of your contentions. These are things into which I never enquired, and of which I never chanced to be informed. But, without any information, I can easily judge with confidence, that it is not of your own friends and adherents that you expect sentiments and conduct quite different from your own, and just the reverse of what you judge to be most wise, liberal, and honourable. You cannot think your own friends such knaves and fools. Then you may reasonably expect that your own arguments, and even your example, will have great weight with them. It must be from the opposite party in your College that you expect such irrational and illiberal conduct.

In this respect, I hope and trust you do them injustice. It is natural, and almost unavoidable, for a person keenly engaged in disputes, to think too unfavourably of the understanding and morals of his adversaries. A person totally uninterested in such disputes, will not readily fall into the same error, and certainly he can have no excuse for doing so. For example, if your adversaries in the College of Surgeons had told me that you and your friends were such a parcel of knaves, and fools, and Shylocks, that you would pay no regard to any rational, liberal, or honourable considerations, but would each insist on cutting his pound of flesh from the breast of some miserable patient whom the bargain with the Managers had made the debtor of your College, I could not have believed them; nor probably should I have met with any credit, either in point of understanding or veracity, if I had professed to believe them.

You

You must excuse me, therefore, when I tell you frankly, that I can as little admit, or expect any credit if I should pretend to admit, your supposition with respect to some of your professional brethren, and that distressing conflict of passions and interests which you dread.

It is evidently impossible that in so numerous a body as the College of Surgeons, all the individuals shall be of the same character, or of equal, or nearly equal understanding and knowledge. This obvious consideration is of itself a conclusive argument against their promiscuous attendance and consultations in the Infirmary. From your intimate acquaintance with many persons, and transactions, totally unknown to me, you may have good reason to believe that several of your professional brethren are very different from you in point of character, and much inferior to you in understanding and knowledge. But I can scarce think you entitled to deem so meanly of any of them, as to suppose that they will act differently from you on this interesting occasion; or attempt to make any kind of contest with the Managers, instead of leaving the business to their consideration, and abiding by their decision, as you very wisely and honourably have resolved to do.

I must repeat what I have said in my Memorial, that nothing less than actual experience of the fact can ever make me believe such sentiments and such conduct *possible*. When probably a great majority of your College, and certainly many individuals of it, highly respectable for their character, their talents, and their knowledge, think and act as you do, can any of your brethren be such block-heads, as not to perceive at once what the consequences of the opposite conduct on their part must be to themselves, in public estimation, that is, in fame and fortune, for the rest of their lives? Their conduct and sentiments must soon be publicly known; for those who acted differently neither would nor could keep them secret.

The public at large cannot judge properly of the *minutiæ* of our professional disputes, and has so often been plagued and surfeited with them, as generally to regard them with contempt and disgust: sometimes with perfect abhorrence. But the same public can judge easily and infallibly, on the principles of common sense and common honesty, *who* act wisely, liberally, and honourably, and *who* act selfishly, fordidly, and unfeelingly, on the general point at present in question. Would any of your brethren wish to see a distinction established among the Members of your College into the Gentlemen and the Shylocks? Would any of them like to be classed with the Shylocks, and to fare accordingly for the rest of his life? If you think so unfavourably of any of them as to suppose, that either they do not see this consequence, or seeing it plainly would disregard it, I wish you would fairly try the experiment on them, and ask them the question; the more publicly the better. Call their attention to the corresponding occurrence in the College of Physicians fifty years ago. Ask them what they would have thought, or what they suppose the public would have thought of our Royal College, if we had disputed the point with the Managers, and insisted on our right, as unquestionably established by the charter of the Infirmary? Our College, to its very great honour, was unanimous and cheerful on that occasion. But if the case had been otherwise, if it had been carried only by a small majority, what would your brethren think, or what would the public have thought, of the minority of the Physicians? Nay, if those who were for contesting the point with the Managers had proved the majority in our College, and had succeeded in their contest with the Managers, what would the public have thought of them and their disgraceful victory? Whatever you, or your professional brethren, or the public, would have thought of such Physicians, we Physicians, and what is more to the purpose on this occasion, the public too, must infallibly think of any Surgeons who at present shall

shall act, as I have for the sake of argument and illustration *supposed* some of the Physicians to have done.

I presume I need not point out to you, but if you please, you may point it out to any of your own brethren who you think do not perceive it, that they collectively, and chiefly the most eminent and best employed of them, can do nothing so much for the pecuniary interest of the Physicians, as to engage in such a conflict of interests and passions with the Managers as you dread, and very wisely, as well as honourably, have resolved to decline. Whatever degrades them, either collectively or individually, in the estimation of the public, must tend greatly, and almost in the same proportion, to raise us, whose conduct in the same circumstances was so different. You know as well as I do, probably much better, what kind of rivalry there is between the Surgeons and Physicians; and that though we never interfere in what is properly your province as Surgeons and Apothecaries, you interfere most notoriously and greatly in ours, and do more than three fourths of what should be done in point of practice by the Physicians. I cannot pay my own brethren so scurvy a compliment, as to believe that any of them would be gratified by seeing any of yours act in that unworthy manner which you are afraid of, or should wish them to do so for the sake of the professional *loss* of fame and fortune *to them*, and consequently *gain to us*, that would necessarily result from such conduct on their part. But I have somewhere read, that in the misfortunes of our best friends, we generally find something that is not disagreeable: and I shrewdly suspect, that if the worst that can be foreseen or supposed, should happen to your College, in consequence of the conduct which you dread in some of your brethren, mine would soon be comforted; and that even from the beginning of the conflict they would exult in the superior wisdom, and liberality, and more honourable conduct of our predecessors on a similar occasion.

In another point of view, and more particularly, let us consider what those passions and interests *can possibly be*, the conflict of which appears to you so formidable.

On the part of the Managers, there *can be no* passion, no interest, no motive of any kind, but honest zeal for the good of the sick poor. Their conduct at the first establishment of this Infirmary, their long struggles with the Surgeons soon after, and again more than thirty years ago, the nature of the thing itself, the practice on the same point in numberless other Hospitals, all concur to preclude the supposition of any improper passion, or any sinister motive in them. As to pecuniary interest, the consideration of it, if it were to be attended to, (which it ought not to be in this case, in which an object of infinitely higher value is at stake), would be strongly in favour of the present system, and against such a change as I conceive to be necessary. For this implies in the first place, the refunding of L. 500, paid by your corporation to the managers, to bring about that cruel bargain. But this is the least of it. The establishment of two or three ordinary attending Surgeons, with even very moderate salaries, as I propose, implies a considerable annual expence to the Hospital. I know not exactly what; probably not less than L. 100, nor more than L. 200 per annum, (for very obvious reasons). We shall suppose it L. 150 per annum. The value of this at twenty year's purchase, is L. 3000. The whole expence to the Infirmary may be L. 3500 or more. If it were twice as much, I should think it well bestowed. Whatever in this respect is the pecuniary expence or loss to the Hospital, is evidently the pecuniary gain of your College. Your brethren, therefore, have a very strong interest in this point of view, to concur with the Managers in the change which I propose, and none to strive against it.

As to any other *interest*, real or supposed, which your brethren may have, or think they have, in the system of promiscuous attendance by rotation, on the principle of acquiring improvement, by
practising

practising in the Infirmary, though at the risk or at the expence of the miserable patients, I have in my Memorial discussed it as fully, and strictly, and calmly, as if there had been nothing in it contrary to justice and humanity, or even to common sense. As my argument on that point is *bona fide* simple mathematical demonstration, and little else than easy arithmetical calculation, I trust it must have convinced you and all your brethren, that in a numerous College like yours, that supposed interest and improvement is *next to nothing*, and absolutely contemptible, certainly not equal in four and twenty years to what the youngest member of your College would acquire in *one* year's permanent attendance. If there be any error in my argument on that point, (or my supposed mathematical demonstration), it must be easy to point it out, and impossible to dispute about it.

In the mean time, I cannot think it necessary to make any addition to it but *one*, and this one is very short ; and though no doubt useless to a man of your talents, perhaps not quite superfluous to some of your brethren, who are less accustomed than you are to follow a chain of reasoning. I wish it to be observed, and I ought to have stated in my Memorial, that the supposed improvement acquired by the Surgeons attending promiscuously in rotation, is in the *inverse proportion* of the wrong done to the poor patients : that is, the more the patients are exposed to suffer, or actually do suffer, the less improvement do the Surgeons acquire by their attendance in that manner ; and consequently the *less interest* (for any *right* of theirs in law or equity to attend in that way I hope I have shewn to be not only an absurdity, but an atrocity and an outrage on human nature) can they have in the continuance of such a system. For example, if two or three Surgeons were really needed to do the Hospital duty to the best advantage, and were permanently appointed to it accordingly ; and if there were but two or three more Surgeons in the town ; and if these were, as in

candour we must suppose them, as well qualified by nature and education as the others, they would have a great interest in being permitted to attend in the Hospital, as well as the two or three who were really needed for it. They would soon acquire great improvement by their attendance in the Hospital, and of course the wrong to the poor patients would be small, and it would be transient. On the other hand, still supposing the number really needed to be but two or three, if the number of Surgeons in the town were 25, or 50, or 100, or 200, and all should wish to attend in rotation, the improvement acquired by each individual by attending for two months once in 4, 8, 16, or 32 years, would be *very small*, and the cruel wrong to the patients *very great*. Whenever the time of attendance, multiplied by the number of Surgeons who chuse to attend in rotation, comes to be equal to the average duration of human life, after the age at which men on the average become Members of your College, then the improvement of each individual, as attending once only in his life, and this for a short period, becomes the least possible, or almost nothing; and the evil to the poor patients becomes the greatest that necessarily results from the system of rotation, or, as it would then be, the system of *constant succession* of the youngest and most inexperienced Surgeons.

The system of rotation, even according to the present numbers of your College, which I understand to be annually increasing, approaches very near to that little or no improvement of the Surgeons by their short periods of attendance at long intervals; and for two or three years together, it is just as great an evil to the sick poor in the Hospital, as if the same Surgeons were never again to attend in it.

These things are undeniable, I think, and almost obvious. But if you find that any of your brethren are not aware of them, I beg you will suggest them to their serious consideration. The importance of attending to them, with a view to prevent any troublesome

some litigation, consists in this, that where there is *no interest* there can be *no right*. This I understand to be a settled principle of law, as well as of equity and common sense. It is well exemplified in the common questions about insurance on ships, houses, goods, or lives. Whatever loss may happen, a person insuring cannot recover from the underwriters, unless he can shew his interest in the person or thing insured. It is not that any the greatest interest can of itself constitute a right, but that a right cannot be constituted or maintained without some specific interest.

As to the *passions* to which you allude as likely to produce a distressing conflict, (distressing to the Managers), after the most mature consideration, I can think of none which it would not be both an injury and an indignity to the Members of your College to impute to them, either collectively or individually. You see by the Surgeons Memorial 1737, what hateful passions, envy, malice, and sordid avarice, actuated Mess. Kennedy & Co. in their contest with the Managers at that time. Or if any additional commentary is wanted on their Memorial and their conduct, you have it in the name of *Alexander Monro*, the father of the present Professor, and of our Medical School. He was the first, and I believe the principal Surgeon, permanently appointed by the Managers; and so far as I can perceive, either by our minutes or the Surgeons Memorial, it was the appointment of him, and of a few other men of merit, evidently the best thing that the Managers could have done for the sick poor, which gave such an alarm to Mess. Kennedy and his associates, and roused them to such extraordinary exertions of Christian charity and brotherly love, as produced the Memorial which I have had the honour to analyse, and that shameful and cruel bargain which I so strongly reprobate. At least, it cannot be said that Dr Monro was *the greatest Dunce* among the Surgeons, and that by his appointment he was likely to *run away with undeserved fame*.

Of such unworthy passions, and of any conflict which they may excite, the Managers can have no fear. The wisest and the most foolish, (not under the immediate influence of them), must foresee alike what regard will be paid to them, and to any contest proceeding from them, either by the public, or in a court of justice. In the present state of the business, I shrewdly suspect, that such a conflict of interests and passions as you seem to dread, far from being matter of affliction to the Managers, would be a subject of amusement and mirth, and really of triumph to them, as well as to the Physicians, and to many of your own professional brethren, who it is plain will be the first to profit by it, even from the day on which it begins. It was my object in my Memorial, and, to tell you the truth, it is my object in this long letter to you, which is, as you may see, a kind of supplemental Memorial, to prevent such a disgraceful conflict. This I should earnestly have wished to do, if I could, even for the sake of your College and your profession, to which I assure you I wish no evil. But more especially I wished, as it was my duty, if possible, to prevent such a conflict for the sake of the Hospital: Not for fear or any doubts of the ultimate issue of it; for of this I was well assured before my Memorial went to the press: Not for fear of any blame or discredit which it can bring on the Managers; for the attempt, even if it could be unsuccessful, must still be greatly to our credit, as you cannot fail to perceive: Not for fear of any evil to the sick poor from such a conflict; for *they* have every thing to gain, and nothing to lose by it. They may be better, and they can be no worse taken care of, than they are according to the present system. I tell you honestly, that I wished to prevent such a conflict, and took upon myself the trouble and expence of that Memorial which you have seen, for no other reason, but just to save the Infirmary the expence of litigation with your College, which, if conducted in the way that lawsuits too often are, and perhaps

perhaps carried to the House of Peers, might very probably cost the Hospital L. 500. This expence, if incurred without necessity, I should think would be paying rather too dear for the malicious joke of seeing your College hunted by the best pack of lawyers in the kingdom, through all the courts of justice in it. But supposing the worst, as I always do in such doubtful cases, that L. 500 of the Infirmary's money must be spent on law, still it would be no worse than if we had to pay your College L. 1000 instead of L. 500, on refunding the money, (*the bribe*), which our predecessors got from yours more than sixty years ago. The Managers, I have good reason to believe, are now thoroughly convinced that L. 500, or L. 1000, ought not to be put in competition with the essential good of the sick poor in the Hospital. If you know of any passions less hateful, and more avowable, than those to which I allude, and such as, without an *insult* to your professional brethren, you may *suppose* to excite them to a conflict with the Managers on this occasion, I wish you, who are not yourself under the influence of them, would state precisely what they are. I am confident they would meet with the most candid and patient attention from the Managers.

Your sentiments and resolutions being what you have so honourably and so fully stated in your card to me, I do not wonder that you should be much displeased at hearing it reported, erroneously, that *you* were to answer my Memorial. But I must take the liberty to say, that I do not think you ought to consider it so deeply as you seem to do. I can tell you something more about that report than you perhaps yet know. I heard that *surmise*, for it neither was nor could be any thing more, within *five hours* from the time when my Memorial was distributed on Monday; at which time, it was very improbable that you should have declared, or even formed any such resolution, and impossible that you should have read one half of it; and when, as I now understand
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by your card to me, you had not read one word of it, and of course could have no precise or just notion of the tenor of it, nor be able to judge whether it were possible or advisable to answer it or not.

The *surmise* in question I understood, and I think you should understand, to have meant no more, but that, *if* my Memorial was to be answered, your friends would rely on *you* as their leader, and the man of the greatest talents among them, to come forth as the champion of their cause, and to answer it for them. The *surmise*, far from being a subject of just offence, was really a compliment to you.

Since you do me the honour to shew so much anxiety about my good opinion of your conduct in that respect, I shall tell you frankly that I never could believe that you, or that any individual of your College, would even attempt to answer my Memorial. I could not suppose you to adopt or try to vindicate the unworthy and hateful sentiments contained in the Surgeons Memorial of 1737: for with respect to their consummate turpitude there can be but one opinion. I could not suppose you to dispute that a *constant succession* of the youngest and most inexperienced Surgeons in Edinburgh, attending and operating in the Hospital, must be cruelly bad for the patients, and inconsistent with the duty of the Managers to permit, for any pecuniary advantage whatever. As little could I suppose you to dispute that the attendance of the very same youngest and most inexperienced Surgeons, in succession, for any number of months or years, as must from time to time happen, according to the system of rotation, must be just as bad for the sick poor in the Hospital during that time, as great a wrong to them, as repugnant to the duty of the Managers, and the purpose of the Infirmary, and as real an abomination to every man of sense and worth, as if it were to last for a century, or for ever:—Much less, (if possible), could I suppose you, or any man of common sense

sense and common honesty, to admit those self-evident truths, and yet to insist on adhering to that pernicious system, because it was the right of your College, long since bought and paid for.

I shall tell you frankly, that the worst I apprehended from you was, that, contrary to your own better judgment, you might find yourself obliged by your situation and connections, to join with your friends, (collectively and as a party), and even to take a very active part as their leader, in opposing that change which I recommend, and which your College in general, or by a great majority, had keenly opposed on a former occasion. *Civium ardor prava jubentium*, in some cases, I believe, has almost irresistible force. Little as I know of party politics of any kind, and much as I hate them, worse even than professional disputes among medical men, I have always understood that the only way to lead a party, or a set of men, is to go along with them; especially when they begin to grow violent and unruly. On such occasions it is well known that men will not attend even to their own interest, and on no occasion will they consent to be made either wiser or better, or follow even an Angel to Heaven, if he were sent on purpose to conduct them thither by such honest and rational means. If only one tenth part of what I have heard be true, many of our greatest statesmen, both *ins* and *outs*, have often been fain to commit the practical *Bull*, of leading their friends by following them.

It was on this principle only that I ever thought it possible you should be my opponent on this occasion. To find that you were not to be so, that you despised and reprobated such caballing, and that you were resolved to act in that independent and honourable manner which you mention in your card, gave me much pleasure; and has procured you the honour, which you perhaps will think rather a burden, of this long manifesto. I was happy to think that I had found a friend and assistant in one whom I expected to have had for an opponent. You will see by my Memorial itself,
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what I apprehended would be the means which a man of talents and thorough knowledge of the subject would take to frustrate my plan ; *not* by answering my Memorial, or attempting to shew that the system of the Surgeons attending in rotation, and consulting promiscuously, is not as bad for the patients as I have shewn it to be ; *not* by requiring any particular examples to be produced in proof of those evils to the patients, of which I have given only a general view ; *not* by requiring that a number of witnesses should be examined to prove that the general system was known to many others, and those the best informed and most competent judges, to be as bad as I represented it ; for any such attempts, and especially any enquiries into particular misfortunes, I was sure would make bad ten times worse ; but by flurring over these things, and keeping them out of sight, as much as possible ; acting on the *defensive*, and leaving it to lawyers to contend for the bargain of 1738 as they best could, on the common principles which would be applicable, and irrefragably valid, in a question about a bargain concerning any kind of property, such as that one which I have supposed to have been made between the Butchers and the Tanners.

To obviate that plan, which was the only one I had to fear, you will observe that I took much pains to state strongly and minutely, on medical and moral principles, the infinite difference between a common contract for property, and the bargain between our predecessors and yours, as involving and cruelly violating the interest and the rights of the sick poor in the Hospital. As my argument on that subject was satisfactory to two eminent lawyers whom I consulted separately, both of whom expressed strongly their astonishment and indignation at that contract, and that system which I reprobated, I presume my argument will be equally satisfactory to other lawyers, and to judges, and to all men of competent understanding and knowledge, who will fairly attend to it, uninfluenced by passion, or interest real or supposed. But from
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the strong hints which you give me in your card, I understand that you think some of your professional brethren are a good deal influenced by passion, and some notion of interest on this subject. I am sure you would not think so without sufficient reason. Such being the case, I fear they will not attend to my argument so patiently as to perceive the force of it, or at least the necessity of answering it completely, if they do not think it conclusive; and of course may rashly engage in a conflict, which can do no good, and may do much harm; which cannot be *afflicting to us* in the way which you suppose, but may be injurious to the slender funds of the Hospital; and which your brethren who engage in it, may find, when too late, good reason to repent bitterly.

After what you have told me of your own sentiments, and resolution to leave the decision of the business to the Managers, I hope it is not going too far to beg of you, to use your influence with your friends to prevail on them to consider with attention that part of my argument, and not to engage in any public conflict till they can give an answer to it, which to themselves at least appears fair and satisfactory.

On one point, I am sure, I may with confidence ask your assistance, which I scarce think you will refuse me, if you consider the nature and importance of the object in view, and that it is no matter of favour or partiality to any individual, or any set of men, but equally for the good of all, and indeed of the Hospital itself, and of the public at large. I allude to the mentioning or enquiring into any particular *misfortunes*; or what might be reckoned instances of ignorance, incapacity, or misconduct, in any of the Surgeons who have attended in rotation. I was aware from the first, how shocking this would be to the public, how injurious to the Hospital, and how cruel to the individual Surgeons who had been unfortunate in their honest and best endeavours to do that duty, to which many of them were unequal; but which, in consequence

of the cruel system established, they could not decline, without tacitly acknowledging their own deficiencies, and actually ruining themselves. You will have seen by my Memorial how careful I was to avoid every allusion to particular instances, to shew that all such enquiries were unnecessary for my general and benevolent purpose, and almost inconsistent with it; and to deprecate them accordingly, as not only improper in themselves, but indelicate, and even cruel to some individuals; and (I may freely say to you) such as could not fail to be very shocking to the public at large, and especially to the poor, who, in their utmost misery, might soon have occasion to seek that relief which the Infirmary was destined to afford them.

I had the vanity to think, as those considerations are abundantly obvious, and perfectly undeniable, that I should succeed in preventing what would be so great an evil to many, and a good to none. I was therefore much surprised and grieved to learn, (on Wednesday, the very day that I left Edinburgh, and within forty-eight hours from the time that my Memorial was distributed), that some particular and personal applications had been made, by some of your professional brethren, of what I had stated in the most guarded and general terms, of such misfortunes.

According to my information, two different individuals had, even in that short time, been making the application of my general remarks to themselves. I declined, as I generally do on all such occasions, to receive any particular information, or even to be informed of the names of the gentlemen who so rashly supposed themselves, or were supposed by others, to be alluded to in my Memorial.

Certainly no such allusions were made, or intended, by me; nor did I ever wish any such applications to be made of my remarks. It was amply sufficient for my purpose, that the truth and general tenor of them could not be disputed; and that numberless

less particulars relating to them, especially the most recent particulars, were much better known to the members of your College, and to many other persons, than they were to me.

I have no doubt either of the justness or the severity of the applications that have been made of my remarks. I have no doubt that you, who have given such strict attention for many years to the practice of Surgery in the Royal Infirmary, and who are so well qualified to judge of it, could easily produce 50 or 100 instances, not one of which I ever heard of, but all of them unquestionably authentic, and abundantly shocking; all of which, or any one of which, would too strongly confirm and illustrate my general observations.

From what you have so properly stated in your card to me, I am confident you will never make such an ungenerous and cruel use of your knowledge: nor did it occur to me when first I read your card, but now it strikes me very strongly, that you must allude to those particular applications of my general remarks, when you express such anxiety at the prospect of a conflict of interests and passions very afflicting to the Managers. Your card was certainly written that very day, perhaps that very hour when I first heard of the beginning of that kind of conflict of interests and passions, which would indeed be very afflicting to the Managers. But observe, if the worst should happen, it is not my fault.

I foresaw the probability of such an evil to the Gentlemen of your College; I warned them strongly of it, that they might guard against it; I did all in my power to prevent it from the first: and I now most earnestly beg of you, who have infinitely more influence with your professional brethren than I have, to use your utmost endeavours to prevent, or if it be too late, as I fear it is, altogether to prevent that sort of conflict, at least to restrain it, and to prevent it from ever coming before the public. I should think you might easily convince even the keenest of them, that

however just and severe their animadversions on their opponents may be, the same observations may be easily retorted on themselves or their friends, perhaps with equal truth, and certainly with equal or greater severity. Of the truth of particular assertions, and consequently of the justness of many remarks and censures, the public can never judge: but it can judge easily, and will judge unmercifully, of the general tenor of them, and of the temper that has long subsisted in your College. Such a conflict, whatever it may be to the Managers, would be worse for your brethren than twenty *Dawpluckers*. It would even be very shocking to the public, and not in the least for the honour or interest of your brethren, if it came to be generally believed, that not professional disputes alone, bad as these are, but corporation politics, have long kept them embroiled; and that the same parties which prevail in Surgeons Hall about the election of a President, (or a Deacon, who has a vote in the Town-Council), prevail also in full vigour in the consulting-room, and in the operation-room, of the Royal Infirmary, when the lives or limbs of some unhappy patient are at stake. This, I hope, is not yet generally known or believed by the public: I am sure I never heard the least surmise of it till some months after I became a Manager of the Royal Infirmary. But within these last twelve months I have seen some things in print, and have heard some such reports and particular instances, as if generally known would effectually establish that very shocking belief; which you will observe *must be true* if it be *believed* and *asserted* even by a *small minority* of your College.

But from what I have heard, I suspect rather that it will be attested by all the Members of it; each party, of course, laying the blame on the other. In this case, though it would be difficult or impossible to judge which was most in fault, it would be impossible not to perceive, that at least one party, most probably both, were much to blame: It would be impossible for any judicious and
impartial

impartial person not to pronounce with indignation, that that system of the promiscuous attendance and consultations of the Surgeons, which exposed the sick poor to such horrible evils, must be fundamentally wrong. It cannot escape your observation, that while I thus earnestly entreat you to employ your great influence with your brethren to prevent such enquiries, and such public discussions, my motive and purpose *must be pure and honourable*, and can be no other than what I have fully expressed. You cannot fail to perceive, that though they are in one point of view foreign to my argument, and unnecessary to it, they are not subversive of it. It is plain that they tend greatly, too greatly, to strengthen, not to weaken my argument, and the Managers claim. They would soon produce all the effect which we want, but they would do a great deal more, which we do not want, and should be very sorry to see. If it ever shall be found *necessary*, which I am happy to think is not likely to be the case, to make them known, it certainly shall be done. None of the Managers can be supposed so brainless or so nerveless, as to hesitate a moment between the two wrongs, shocking the public with the particular knowledge of such evils, or allowing such shocking evils to continue. The former would be virtue, and real kindness, in comparison of the latter.

It would be mere affectation in me, and I am sure would meet with no credit from you, who know so much of the practice of Surgery in the Royal Infirmary, were I to say that I had not heard of any recent instances (within these few years) of such professional misfortunes. But you must have seen by this time how careful I have been in my Memorial not to allude to them even in the most distant manner. I am sure that you yourself, who probably know more of the matter than any body, could not, from any thing that I have said, undertake to specify any case, or any Surgeon, that I had particularly in view.

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As the most convincing proof which can be given that I meant no such particular applications as I understand were soon made of my general remarks, I shall mention to you a few out of many *older* stories, some of them probably long before your time, though within my memory ; and such as within these few months I have heard from different persons who were eye-witnesses of them.

[For reasons fully explained already, I suppress here the particular instances which were mentioned in my letter to Mr John Bell : but he has my hearty permission to publish them *verbatim* if he pleases.]

I observe with much pleasure what you mention in your card, “ That nothing could engage you in any public dispute, nor be “ an apology to yourself for writing any Pamphlet or Memorial, “ except the sincere hope of being useful, or the necessary duty of “ self-defence.” Your resolution in both these respects appears to me so indisputably proper and honourable, that it would be superfluous to say so, or to take any notice of it, were it not that it seems to imply some apprehension on your part, that I (in my Memorial) had either made some such attack on you as would oblige you to defend yourself in that manner, or else that I had blamed you for defending yourself when attacked by others. Insinuations so groundless, nay, so repugnant to the tenor of my Memorial, must have proceeded from some of those “ idle and busy people,” as you very properly call them, who have been amusing themselves with fancying some sinister motives on my part for what I have done.

As you have probably read my Memorial by this time, I need not tell you that it contains no attack or censure on you. On the contrary, in the only two passages in which you are alluded to, for you are not mentioned in it, you will find, that it is not only without contumely, but with respect and honour : In the one place, as “ a man of talents, and for ought I know,

“ a very good Surgeon :” In the other, as “ the man of the
 “ greatest talents, and the great leader of one party.” This
 may be erroneous, but it cannot be, nor was it meant to be, in-
 jurious to you. If it is erroneous, I shall be obliged to you if
 you will set me right. It was written avowedly without any
 direct or personal knowledge, on the faith of current reports,
 which I had often heard repeated, and never once heard contra-
 dicted.

As to the other point to which that passage in your card seems
 to relate, some surmise that I had blamed you for having defended
 yourself when attacked in your professional character, I must in the
 first place assure you solemnly, that I never knew or suspected,
 till I read your card, that you had defended yourself against such
 attacks, from Jonathan Dawplucker, or any other body. In the
 second place, I shall tell you frankly, that I think you did per-
 fectly right to defend yourself against such a virulent attack : nor
 should I blame you in the least, if on receiving such provocation,
 (for I have now read that first Dawplucker), you have defended
 yourself with much asperity. Though I never will interfere, or
 give any opinion in such disputes, I shall be curious to read your
 defence, from which I expect great entertainment. In the third
 place, I need not tell you, for you surely know it already if you
 have read my Paper, that there is no such censure expressed or in-
 sinuated in it ; nor can I conceive how such a thing could be sup-
 posed, unless perhaps by some misapplication, or misconstruing
 of the Greek epigram, (given as an aphorism of Hippocrates),
 which, like the ironical exhortations to Dawplucker to continue
 his practice of deplumation, was intended, and I should have
 thought must have been understood, as the strongest possible warn-
 ing and admonition to all parties to desist from that kind of war-
 fare, by telling them that the person, however keen and invete-
 rate, who began the attack, would probably soon have the worst
 of

of it ; like the wicked viper in the epigram, who bit a Cappadocian, but died herself as soon as she tasted his poisonous blood.

I am much gratified with the confidence which you express in the impartiality, humanity, and public spirit of my Memorial, and for taking the trouble to assure me of those sentiments, even before you read it. I am sure the reading of it must have completely satisfied you, that you had done me no more than justice in that respect. Indeed I think it must surpass the power of human genius or imagination, to suppose any sinister motive on my part for what I have done. You know, that in my situation I have every thing to lose, and nothing to gain, by any such unworthy conduct.

Allow me, therefore, to point out to you, that there is one, and but one passage in your card, which seems to do me injustice, at least by insinuation, and which at any rate does not suit well with the rest of your card. You say, “ you will wait composedly the “ issue of this business, by which alone the design of this address “ can be judged of.” This seems to imply, that the design of it may be something different from what is avowed. This I think is impossible ; and so I trust will you think, when you have read my Paper. But at any rate, I cannot see on what principle of logic, or morals, or law, or equity, my design can be judged of by the issue of the business ; in which (I mean in the selection of Surgeons for permanent attendance in the Hospital) I have solemnly declared that I will take no concern ; and in which, if I did take a share, I should be but *one* of twelve, or perhaps twenty men, each of whom would have an equal vote with me, and probably much more influence. If the Managers agree to do what I propose, you might reasonably say that such was my design. But if they should do something very different, perhaps repugnant to my principles, my reasonings, and my wishes, and almost as bad as the present system, do you think my design can be judged of by that,

that, or can I be blamed for it? You might as reasonably propose to hang me for the first rape which any of them individually shall commit. What happened once may happen again; they may be bribed, as their predecessors were in 1738, to do what they all know to be wrong; or the Devil may enter into them fifty different ways; and still I may be as innocent of all their misconduct as you will be. This I think you must acknowledge, if you will attend to it for a moment.

But it is for a much more important purpose than remonstrating with you on that contingent and very improbable injustice to myself, that I take notice of your insinuation. I have as perfect confidence as you express in the decision of the Managers, as what “ will be honourable and impartial, tending only to the public “ good;” that is, to the best of their judgment, information, and belief. But they are not infallible: and though there can be no doubt that, in the first place, they must get rid of that abominable contract which has long restrained them from doing their duty; and no doubt that they must henceforth and for ever take care not to make any bargain with your College, or with any set of men, which may hinder them from making occasionally such changes, and in general doing whatever they think best for the sick poor in the Hospital, as their duty requires of them; yet there may be great doubts as to the individuals who ought in the first place to be selected, and permanently, either for life and good behaviour, or for a term of years, appointed ordinary Surgeons to the Hospital.

Though *all* the Members of your College *cannot* be, yet *many* of them certainly *may be, equally* well qualified for that duty: many more I am convinced are so, than can ever be wanted to do that duty to the best advantage; just as is the case with the College of Physicians. I am sure the Managers would be happy, as indeed it is their duty, to obtain every possible information and assistance to

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direct their judgment and choice in so important a business. I have no doubt that you could give them valuable and satisfactory information with respect to that important concern. What you say of your resolution to wait the issue of the business, and from it to judge of the design of my Address, seems to imply, that you have already some fixed test or standard by which you can judge, and mean to decide, on the propriety of the Managers conduct. Would it not be better to communicate this to them without delay? Would it not be better to prevent, or at least to do your best endeavours to prevent, any wrong from being done, and to procure the utmost good that can be procured to the sick poor, than to reserve to yourself the means and the power of condemning afterwards the Managers for any wrong that they may have done, perhaps purely for want of such information as you could have given them? Nay, if you thought more unfavourably than you do of the Managers, still it would be right to give them that kind of information, as it would leave them less or no excuse for any wrong they might do, and would give tenfold force to any just animadversions which you or your brethren might make on their conduct. To give your advice, information, and assistance to the Managers in that respect, even publicly and in print, would not be inconsistent with your resolution expressed in your card to me. It might naturally result from your "sincere hope of being useful." But I should think it still better if you did it more privately, and only in writing. I cannot offer to lay before them any such paper from you; because I have already declared, that I will take no concern in the choice of the Surgeons, either directly or indirectly. But any other of the Managers, I am convinced, will be glad to do it. For the same reason you will understand, that I can neither second nor oppose your recommendation of particular Surgeons. But you are welcome to state, that you offered it in consequence of my suggestion. I take it for granted, that any such paper from you to the Managers will be

be written on the same liberal and honourable principles which are so well expressed in your card to me, without any selfish or party views. And I think I can safely promise for the Managers, that they will faithfully pay due attention to any such communication from you : that is, they will either do as you propose, or be ready, whenever there is occasion, to give good reasons for not doing so. But you must not understand that I am authorised to promise for them, or that I think they should promise, that they will be directed in their choice by your opinion, or that of any individual of your College. That would be very absurd : and it would be still more absurd to be directed by your whole College as a body, or to leave the choice to the majority of your College ; for reasons too obvious to mention ; but which seem to have been well understood and strongly felt by Mr Kennedy and his friends near seventy years ago, and which have been too often and too strongly illustrated by the conduct of certain Universities, which must be nameless.

As you must by this time have read my Memorial from end to end, I trust you are convinced, that you did me no more than justice when you took it for granted, that my Memorial contained nothing insulting to your profession, or injurious to any individual of your College. But I cannot say, with truth, that I think myself much obliged to you for such a compliment. To have supposed otherwise of me, would have been to suppose me stark mad ; for nothing but perfect insanity could produce or account for such conduct on my part, which on any occasion would be disgraceful and ruinous to me, and which, on this occasion, would have been inconsistent with my plan, to obtain the unanimous approbation of all men of sense, and worth, and competent knowledge, and the unanimous concurrence of the gentlemen of your profession, in the measure that I proposed. If I had wronged any individual among them, or insulted the whole of them by insulting their profession,

they would soon, even before this time, have had full revenge of me. It is possible, notwithstanding all my anxious care to avoid such particular allusions as could be applied to any individuals, that some unlucky and cruel applications may be made of my general remarks. I can only say, that I never intended such a wrong to them, but quite the contrary ; and that I am very sorry such a wrong to them should be done by others who have presumed to make applications which I never meant. But it would be indelicate and cruel, and make bad worse, to enquire into particulars.

As to any insults to your profession, nothing could be more repugnant to my real sentiments, uniformly expressed, and, I should think, abundantly testified by my conduct all my life to all your professional brethren. You know how our acquaintance began, and how it has continued. If you think it worth your while to enquire, you will find that I have lived precisely on the same footing with all others of your profession ; or perhaps you know already, that I never chose to have any intercourse or connection with any of them, but what fairly resulted from the practice of my own ; of course, I have met times innumerable with those who have the greatest employment, and very seldom, or never, with others of them ; and have had much less intimacy with several of them than probably I should have had if they had not been Surgeons, or I not a Physician. You cannot say there is any thing wrong in that conduct, or that you could even have wished me to have acted otherwise. You cannot fail to perceive, that the opposite conduct towards your brethren would have been illiberal at least, if not knavish, in one of my profession. You cannot, therefore, regard that kind of reserve on my part as implying any contempt for your profession, or any disrespect for those who practise it ; but quite the contrary, a proper respect and delicacy to them, and confidence in their upright conduct. No man can be supposed to know better the real importance of Surgery, and the respect due to men of merit in that profession, than

than a Physician, not bred a Surgeon, and who never attempts to practise Surgery. You surely know what I do, fifty or a hundred times in a year, to patients who, not understanding the distinctions of our professions, apply to me when they labour under complaints in which I can do them little or no service, and which properly belong to your province; I can do nothing but refer them to the gentlemen of your profession for relief. Or what do you think I should do if myself and some of my best friends had got severe wounds, or broken or dislocated limbs? Do you think I should trust their lives or limbs, or my own, to the care of a Physician, or of a Surgeon? What I have uniformly thought, and said, and done, with respect to your profession, I have expressed *strongly and repeatedly* in my Memorial. If you know of any thing stronger in favour of your profession, and of those who practise it, especially of those with whom I am best acquainted, though, having no knowledge of the contrary, I presume the same of all the rest, I beg you will inform me, and I shall be happy to avail myself of your information the first opportunity.

In the mean time I presume, without any paradox, that I have expressed myself as I really think of your profession, and of those who practise it in this city, with much more esteem and respect than you have generally done, or perhaps would do at present. And I doubt much whether many of your professional brethren, if any of them, think and speak as favourably of Physic and Physicians, as I have done of Surgery and Surgeons. You must have seen, that in my Memorial I have made no distinction but what results from their very different conduct in similar circumstances, between them and Physicians. The conduct of the Physicians to the Infirmary was liberal and honourable; and must have been thought so, if it had been done by a Corporation of Chimney Sweepers. The conduct of the Surgeons was just the reverse; and must be thought so if it were done by a College of Princes. I trust there neither is, nor ever was,

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(not even excepting Deacon Kennedy and his worthy associates), nor ever will be, in your College, so great a Dunce as to suppose, that the respect due to your profession, and to the many men of merit who practise it, can be extended, or ought to be extended, to every thing, right or wrong, liberal or fordid, done by a Corporation of Surgeons, or by any individuals of that Profession. Does your respect for your own profession extend to all the operations of Dawplucker? What would you have said or thought of me, if, instead of giving the true account of all Medical warfare as it was, and is, and ever will be, and must be, I had given ten or a dozen quotations from the first Dawplucker? And what would Benjamin Bell and his friends have said or thought of me, if I had given as many choice quotations from the second Dawplucker, in proof of that inveterate rancour, which it was essential to my argument, and to the faithful discharge of my duty, to shew, prevailed among your professional brethren? I should in that case have said nothing but the truth; but it would not have been the whole truth.

I thought it more candid, as well as rational, and much more delicate and respectful to your College, to shew, that such disputes were not accidental and transient, depending on the particular character, talents, and conduct of a few individuals, but in a manner essential to the Medical Profession, and at least universally found among us. My examples and illustrations were taken chiefly from my own profession. You know well why I took them from distant ages and nations rather than from our own; and what considerations have always restrained me, even in the discharge of my Academical duty, from dissecting and anatomising, as they deserve, many of our modern and home-bred medical writers. If any of your brethren, or you in particular, whom I believe to be very well qualified for the task, will take the trouble to treat them and their systems, and their reasonings, their observations, their cases, their contradictions, their lies, their disputes, controversies, and quarrels,

quarrels, as you think they deserve, I shall be much obliged to you, and my students much more. I took my illustrations of Chirurgical warfare chiefly from London; which, I think, was delicate to the Surgeons of Edinburgh; I am sure it was meant to be so. I gave no particular instances of such warfare among them, because I thought such instances would be cruel, and might even be injurious to some individuals; and I referred, for that general information which was indispensably necessary in my argument, to books already in print, and much better known to many other people than to me. I treated such warfare with ridicule, rather than with that serious and just reprehension which it deserved; because it was impossible that such ridicule could be really hurtful or injurious to any individuals, and I thought it most likely to accomplish the general good which I had in view. I know there are many

“ Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,

“ But touch’d and sham’d by ridicule alone.”

My real serious object was to save the Infirmary the expence, and your College the disgrace of a lawsuit. Whatever some idle busy people, as you very properly call them, may do, I am sure you will not dispute with me, that Physic and Surgery are only different branches of the same profession; that the same innate and inveterate evils pervade and corrupt them both; that the science and the art of both are very imperfect; that they are not only interesting sciences and useful arts, but trades and crafts, by which those who practise them must live; that consequently these are necessarily rivals, and often bitter enemies to one another; that people in general expect much more from Physic and from Surgery, than either the one or the other can do for them; and yet that it would be a cruel wrong to people to undeceive them on this point, if it were possible to do so, which may well be doubted; that both

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of them must be practised with a certain kind of secrecy; that neither the public, nor the patients themselves, can in general judge fully and fairly of the real and comparative merits of Physicians and Surgeons by their performances, as they may do of Painters and Fiddlers, Tailors and Shoemakers; that those who alone can fairly judge of the merits of medical men, have an evident interest, and a strong temptation to conceal and decry them, especially when they are very great; and that many of the best judges have not been able to resist that temptation; that many medical men (Physicians and Surgeons alike) have endeavoured to acquire distinction by framing and publishing systems, others by making, (or pretending to make), and publishing observations, and histories of cases; the former striving to display their talents, their science, and their learning, the latter to shew their accuracy and attention, their skill and their success; that their systems are in general erroneous, often visionary and pernicious, their reasonings contemptible, their observations contradictory, their cases deceitful; that they overturn one another's systems, refute one another's reasonings, controvert one another's facts, and ridicule one another's cases, without mercy; that even where there is no intended deceit or falsehood, there is always imperfection, and often error in stating a case; that every case may be stated, as every story may be told, two or three ways, and perhaps none of them the right way; that publications of cases are often particularly disgraceful, and much worse than any errors in opinions or reasonings, as many of them have been known, and many more have been strongly suspected to be wilfully false; that cases and observations when inconsistent cannot be all true, but that they may be all false; that the disputes among medical men about their systems, their reasonings, their observations, and their cases, have been numberless, endless, useless, violent, implacable, and disgraceful.

You will not dispute with me that most of these things are sad evils,

evils, and that it would be happy for mankind if they or any of them could be removed, or even lessened.

I know of nothing so likely to have that salutary effect, as fairly stating them, shewing some of their bad consequences, especially the contempt and reproach which they bring on our profession, and treating them with ridicule rather than with grave censure. I shall be glad to have it said of me, “ *Castigat ridendo mores.*” If you know of any better means to accomplish the same desirable end, I heartily wish you would employ them. *Si quid novisti rectius istis, candidus imperti: si non, his utere mecum.*

In the mean time, you, and your more distrustful Brethren, may see from the whole tenor of my Memorial, that I no more meant to insult your profession, than to insult my own; or to insult my own Students, and their Societies; or to insult the Government of my country, and Religion itself; because I have treated with ridicule the disputes of Physicians, the common errors of medical Students, the common abuses of their Societies, the foolish debates and disgraceful party spirit which too often prevail in popular Assemblies, and the still more hateful disputes and rancorous warfare of angry controversial Divines.

To you, even before you read my Paper, still more after reading it, all this long discussion would be useless. But it may be of some use to many men of sense, and worth, and candour, who have not taken the trouble to read my Memorial, and who rashly judge of it from one or two passages, without knowing the least of its general tenor and purpose. As to those idle busy people, whose veracity, as well as understanding, you seem to hold in just contempt, it is impossible to set them right; and I trust you are too wise a man to attempt it. They are beyond the reach of argument or reason.

Whatever such men may think of me, you, I am sure, cannot think me such an ass, as ever to have expected to do the great

public good which I intended, without incurring the foulest suspicions and reproaches of the vulgar, the ignorant, and the malicious.

I know there are many people who do not believe in Virtue, or understand it, or know what it is. That is the worst of vice, and incapable of reform. “ *Malheur à ceux qui cessent à croire à la Vertu.*”

The suspicions and reproaches of such men are not indifferent to me; they are acceptable, and part of my reward for doing what is right. They tend to give me some distinction, in common with the greatest, the wisest, and the best men in the nation; and they will never discompose my philosophy.

It is long since I knew the fable of the Mastiff and his Whelp, who were going through a village together. All the little dogs came out and barked at them. “ Father,” said the Whelp, “ why “ don’t you worry these nasty curs that bark at you?” “ Child,” said the old dog, “ if there were no curs, I should be no Mastiff.”

I trust the length of this *Epistolaccio* will be an excuse for the delay in sending it.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your obliged and most obedient servant,

J. GREGORY.

Such were the arguments and explanations by which I endeavoured to convince Mr John Bell and his adherents of the injustice which they did to me, and the still greater wrong which they were likely to do to themselves, by persisting in mistaking, or misrepresenting, the tenor and purpose of my Memorial. By such means I hoped to have prevented any such answers and publications, as that one with which he has favoured the world.

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*At Phæbi nondum patiens immanis in antro
 Bacchatur vates; magnum si pectore possit
 Excussisse Deum: tanto magis ille fatigat -
 Os rabidum, fera corda domans, fingitque premendo.
 Ostia jamque domus patuere ingentia centum
 Sponte sua, vatisque ferunt responsa per auras.*

Happy indeed it was for all concerned that I did not succeed in that well meant but ill judged attempt. There can be no doubt, that the head of Jupiter, or the belly of Garagantua, must have burst, if they had been pregnant with so many vast conceptions, and had not been allowed to give them vent. Then would the world have been deprived for ever, not only of Mr John Bell's inestimable answer to my Memorial, but of numberless other works, probably not less admirable, which may reasonably be expected from his inexhaustible matrix.

That I may not incur the reproach of suppressing any part of a correspondence so honourable to him, or of telling only part of the truth, I subjoin three other pieces of our correspondence, which, with the preceding five, make the whole of it. But for the right understanding of these I must premise, that the first time I met Mr John Bell after his answer to my Memorial was published, I addressed him with the same frankness and good humour as on all former occasions, thanked him for the copy of it which he had sent me, and for the work altogether, which I assured him, with perfect truth, had afforded me much entertainment and gratification, and told him that he was heartily welcome to use all manner of freedom with every thing that I wrote. These declarations he received very graciously, and replied to them in the most polite terms. At parting I reminded him of the copy of the Surgeons Memorial (1737), which he had applied to Mr Jardine to borrow from me

for his use, when he was writing his answer to me; and which, as it had been in his hands for some weeks, I presumed he had done with, and begged him to return to me. This he most politely promised to do.—That same evening I had the honour to receive from him the following letter.

N° VI.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR very generous manner of receiving me in the streets, and the terms in which you addressed me, convince me of your liberal dispositions, and remind me strongly of the many kind things you were pleased to say of me at a time of life when such attentions were to me of more importance than now, and could not be unacceptable to any man.

Your continued liberality encourages me to answer that card which you did me the honour to address to me some months ago. I am happy to find that I may now remind you of your former liberal invitation, “that though we were necessarily opponents, “there was no reason why we should be enemies.” I hope to be allowed the benefit of this expression.—I remember indeed nothing but kindness on your part towards me, and shall always take a pleasure in showing Dr Gregory every mark of respect.

Believe me, Sir, in sincerity and friendship,

Your most obedient,

JOHN BELL.

George's Street, N° 9.

N° VII.

N^o VII.

St Andrew's Square, Sunday Evening, Dec. 7. 1800.

DEAR SIR,

I am very sorry, and to say the truth, somewhat surpris'd, that you should have supposed me capable of such foolish and illiberal conduct, as to take amiss your Pamphlet in answer to my Memorial. I have on the contrary been much entertained and gratified with it. And if you chose to speak out all that you think, I presume you would say you thought yourself much obliged to me for giving you so fine an opportunity to display your talents. Perhaps I may yet give you another: but this I cannot absolutely promise; for it must depend on my finding leisure for it; as to inclination; I have enough. Any thing that I shall write on the subject, you shall be heartily welcome to use all manner of freedom with: to dissect and anatomise it in your best manner. *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim.* There are many points on which we differ so much, that to argue about them with one another would be useless and endless: for example, the Clinical Lectures. I should wish, if I can find time, to state *seriously* my thoughts of them. Many other things in your pamphlet I should treat only with good-humoured raillery.

If you do not know it already, I have the pleasure to inform you, that by your last publication you have completely won the heart of your old enemy Judas Johnson, Esq; who is quite charmed with it, and declares he had no notion that you were a man of such talents.

I am your obliged and most obedient servant,

J. GREGORY.

P. S. I shall be obliged to you if you will return me by the bearer the Surgeons Memorial.

To Mr John Bell.

N^o VIII.

N° VIII.

Mr Bell returns the Memorial to Dr Gregory with his respectful compliments ; wishes him all possible success in his new enterprise, which he trusts will be as profitable for the Clinical School, as his first was for the School of Surgery—and as acceptable to his old friend Judas Johnston as any thing Mr Bell can write.

George's Street, N° 9.

SINCE the last of the preceding letters was written, and even since the greater part of the preceding pages was printed off, an event has occurred which will afford the public some amusement, and will save me much trouble.

The Royal College of Surgeons (that is to say the majority of that Society) has brought the general question in dispute between them and the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, I mean the validity of the bargain, or supposed contract, between their predecessors and ours in 1738, before a Court of Justice.

This, of course, precludes all further reasonings or illustrations from me on that point ; for, in the first place, they must now be quite unnecessary, as every thing that I could urge, and much more, will be stated much better, and to much better purpose, in the proper place, by our counsel learned in the law ; and, in the second place, I do not think it quite proper for me to meddle with a question which is now under consideration in a Court of Justice. Neither the torrent of abuse poured out on me by Mr John Bell in his Pamphlet, nor the conduct of his Brethren who first employed him to write that Pamphlet, and then, by their vote of thanks to him,

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him, sanctioned it and adopted it as their own, can make it right for me to offer any opinion or argument on the question, which the Court must decide. I therefore, with much pleasure, change the plan of this Memorial; and, in the following pages, shall confine my remarks to certain particulars contained in Mr John Bell's pamphlet, which, as interesting to me personally, or to the Managers as a body corporate, or to the public at large, seem to require some animadversion, but are totally unconnected with the legal question now at issue.

EVEN in the letters prefixed by Mr John Bell to his answer to my Memorial, there are some things which must not be allowed to pass unnoticed.

In the first of them we are informed, that "at a meeting of the Junior Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, it was resolved, that Mr John Bell be requested to draw up an answer to Dr Gregory's Memorial, to be presented to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary at their first meeting, for the purpose of doing away those gross misrepresentations of the character and conduct of the younger Surgeons contained in the said Memorial."

This resolution is expressed in such a manner, as to make every reader believe that *all* the junior Surgeons agreed in that resolution and request, and in thinking that I in my Memorial had grossly misrepresented their character and conduct.

But the fact is, all the junior Surgeons did not concur in that resolution; nor do I believe that they were all at that meeting, or even knew of such a meeting being called: and most certainly they did not all agree in thinking that I had misrepresented their character and conduct; for several of them keenly adopted the same sentiments.

ments and principles which I had expressed, and avowed them in the strongest possible terms. Such has been the conduct of Messrs. Andrew Inglis, William Brown, John Thomson, George Bell, William Newbigging, and John Allan. It is but justice to these Gentlemen to mention their names, as it would be highly injurious to them to have it believed by the public that they concurred with the majority of their brethren, the junior Surgeons, in so unjust and absurd an opinion of my Memorial, and in the resolution to request Mr John Bell to write an answer to it.

The perusal of my Memorial must convince every intelligent and candid person, that nothing unjust, or even unfavourable, with respect to the junior Surgeons, is said or intended by me; and the conduct of these six gentlemen of that class, affords complete proof that it is not the accidental circumstance of being a junior Surgeon, nor yet any misrepresentation of the character and conduct of the junior Surgeons as a class or body of men, which some of them have so boldly imputed to me, that makes any one of them think unfavourably of my Memorial, or differ in opinion from me as to the evils resulting from their promiscuous attendance in the Infirmary by rotation.

For any individual to misrepresent grossly the character and conduct of the junior members of any Society or Corporation, appears to me so absurd a folly, as can be accounted for only on the supposition of downright insanity; especially when it is evidently for the honour, the interest, and the comfort of such an individual to live on good terms with every member of that Society.

There are some Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, both junior and senior, whom I do not know by sight, and others whom I do not know even by character, and of whom I neither know nor ever heard any evil. It is evidently impossible that I should have any wish to injure such men, either collectively or individually, by misrepresenting their character and conduct. And, in fact, so far
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am I from thinking unfavourably of the character and conduct of the Junior Surgeons, or from having in my Memorial said any thing injurious of them, in comparison of the Senior Members of their College, that I have been at much pains to express and to establish an almost opposite sentiment.

If it will afford them any satisfaction or comfort, I shall assure them, that to my certain knowledge *some* of the Junior Surgeons are very greatly superior in talents and knowledge to *some* of the Senior Surgeons. But that *all* the Juniors should be superior to *all* the Seniors; or that *all* the Juniors should be equal, or nearly equal, to one another in talents and professional knowledge; or that the worst of the Juniors should be better than the best of their Seniors, or at least as good as them; or that it should be a matter of perfect indifference to the sick poor in the Hospital, what Surgeon, or how many Surgeons in rotation, shall have the care of them:—all these are such things as I never can believe, or expect any credit from men of sense if I should profess to believe.

As little can I believe that Surgeons do not improve by much experience; and that, from the nature of their profession, it is impossible that they should improve by experience; which is the doctrine now maintained by Mr John Bell and his adherents. I believe the merit of the discovery is entirely their own; and I scarce think any person will choose to dispute it with them.

From the boldness with which Mr John Bell asserts it, in his answer to my Memorial, and from his total silence with respect to the very opposite opinion, which was strongly asserted by Deacon Kennedy and his associates as self-evident and undeniable, and seemingly admitted as such by the Managers and by the public more than sixty years ago, and indeed ever since, and on the faith of which the bargain in 1738 was concluded, it is plain that Mr John Bell and his adherents have completely *shifted their ground*. They now contend for the validity and continuance of that bar-

gain, *not* as being for the good of the Surgeons, and in a manner necessary for their improvement, though at the risk and expence of the sick poor in the Hospital, but as not in the least for the good of the Surgeons, who, from the hour in which they finish their apprenticeships, and become Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, have attained the highest professional skill, and manual dexterity as operators ; so that the only principles on which they now contend for that bargain, and for their own promiscuous attendance by rotation, are, that these things are honourable and gratifying to the Surgeons, and, though not positively good, at least not bad, but quite indifferent to the sick poor in the Hospital.

I give Mr John Bell great credit for this new and masterly piece of generalship ; shifting his ground completely, when he found his former position not quite so tenable as it had at first been thought ; and greater credit still for the superior genius he has shewn, in now choosing a position which, to men of ordinary talents, or plain common sense, must appear absolutely untenable. One point he undoubtedly secures by it ; his brethren can lose nothing, even if their cause shall be decided against them. As it is not now for the sake of any improvement to themselves that they are so eager to give their laborious services ; if they shall be prevented from doing this, they will be saved an infinite deal of trouble ; they will be preserved from all those risks to themselves, in point of fame and fortune, which might accidentally have resulted from the bad success of various pieces of surgical practice, or from a fatal event of a capital operation, however dexterously performed ; while still their honour will remain entire ; and their good intentions no man can take from them.

If the corporation of Bakers had been accustomed to furnish the patients in the Infirmary with bread, the corporation of Butchers to furnish them with meat, the Tailors with clothes, the Shoemakers with shoes, the Barbers with shaving ; and if all these several corporations

rations had been accustomed to furnish their respective commodities and good offices *gratis*, as the Surgeons have done their services ; and if the Managers, perhaps from some notion of getting better bread, and meat, and clothes, and shoes, and shaving, from a few individuals of each corporation, chose to employ but a few instead of all the members of them, the others, though still willing to give their aid as before, could not complain of any loss that they sustained, or any wrong done to them ; and as long as their Christian charity and brotherly love continued in vigour, they could never fail to find plenty of objects on whom they might bestow their good offices.

But whatever merit Mr John Bell may have in contriving so new an argument and state of the case, which I dare say will astonish at least, and perhaps puzzle the ablest lawyers that are opposed to him, I must think he and his friends have carried the joke rather too far, when they reproach me with misrepresenting the character and conduct of the Junior Surgeons ; for they must have perceived that I took the fact as stated by those very Surgeons who made the bargain with the Managers ; but I considered that fact relatively to the poor patients, while Mess. Kennedy and Co. considered it only in relation to the Junior Surgeons, and the improvement which at that time they avowedly stood much in need of, and hoped to acquire by practising in the Hospital. To be committed to the care of such Surgeons, who needed such improvement, and practised in hopes of acquiring it, was surely a cruel wrong to the patients.

I should have thought it more candid, as well as more rational in Mr John Bell, to have given me due praise for exposing the turpitude and atrocity of Deacon Kennedy's argument ; to have declared, that he agreed with me in reprobating the bargain made on that detestable principle ; and after disclaiming it in the strongest terms, to have proceeded to state and illustrate fully his own new prin-

ciple and noble discovery, that Surgeons have no need of experience, and can be no better for it.

As the most conclusive fact and argument that I can mention, in proof that I neither misrepresented nor wished to misrepresent the character and conduct of the Junior Members of the College of Surgeons, I shall state one curious particular with respect to the behaviour of two of them on this occasion. I do it with peculiar pleasure, because I think their behaviour has done them very great honour. It would be improper here to mention their names; those whom it most concerns, and probably some others, will understand perfectly to whom and to what I allude.

From the experience which I have had of them and they of me, I am sure that no Members of their College can be less inclined than these two are to do any thing kind or obliging to me. None can think more unfavourably of me, both in point of understanding and candour, than they have publicly and in print declared that they did; the one I mean as the author of a certain anonymous pamphlet, the other as his intimate confidential friend, who knew and approved of the composition and publication of it.

In that pamphlet I was reproached, in very bitter and sarcastic terms, with gross ignorance, bad reasoning, and shameful dissimulation, no less, indeed, than suppressing part, and consequently misrepresenting the whole, of the doctrine of a celebrated philosopher, whose opinions I had taken the liberty to controvert.

It would be impertinent here to mention the subject of our controversy; but it is proper to say, that it did not in the least relate either to Physic or Surgery.

As I am never in the least disposed to be angry in such controversies, and generally am much gratified and amused, when I find myself *unjustly* charged with doing wrong, which I knew was the case at that time, I made a fair and calm attempt, which probably the author of the pamphlet little expected, to convince him of the gross

gross injustice that he had done me, and of some of the many errors of his own reasonings. Both these points I *knew* I could establish in such a manner as to preclude all rational dispute about them.

I was tempted to make the trial, because I observed, on reading the pamphlet, some evident proofs of quickness and acuteness in the author of it, and a good specimen of knowledge of at least one branch of science, Chemistry. His defects and his faults, of which his pamphlet amply testified, seemed to me such as might easily be supplied and corrected. The petulance of his style, and the strange injustice he had done me, I imputed to great youth and total inexperience, which faults are more generally mended than any others that I know of. The errors in his reasonings, which were such as to shew total ignorance of the first principles of demonstrative reasoning, (logical or mathematical), I was sure could proceed from nothing but a defect in his education; for I have had occasion to see many examples of the same kind. Much as I distrust what is commonly called metaphysics, I was confident that as soon as I should point out to him the well established principles of reasoning, which he had unknowingly violated, he would find it *impossible* to dispute them. As to his acknowledging his error, that, of course, was to be just as he pleased; it was entirely his business, not mine: I could suffer no evil from his not doing it; he might suffer a great deal.

I was encouraged to make the trial, by the circumstance of his pamphlet being anonymous, and my not knowing who the author was, nor even suspecting that he lived in Edinburgh; for his work was published in London. I thought I had a better chance of meeting with patient and candid attention from an unknown author who had got into such a scrape, than from one whose name was publicly known, and who, of course, would probably make it

a point of honour not to acknowledge his error, however gross, or however clearly pointed out to him.

I wrote to the unknown author of the pamphlet, committing my letter to the care of his London bookseller and publisher. I remonstrated with him, but in very mild terms, on the rashness and impropriety of his conduct towards me, and even of the injustice he did me, in publishing such a work, without allowing me to see it, at least after it was in print, and to have an opportunity, either of acknowledging the error of my reasoning, if such error was pointed out to me, or of giving him my reasons for thinking that his reasoning, not mine, was erroneous. Such was the tenor of the offer I had made to all whom it might concern, when I published that book which he had treated so roughly. But that offer, though surely a very candid, and not a very common one, he had thought fit to disregard.

I told him in my letter, what must have been very surprising to him, and, if he believed it, very mortifying also, that his great objection to my argument, the one on which he seemed chiefly to value himself, and on which he had founded his severe charge of suppressing part of the doctrine of my adversary, and consequently misrepresenting the whole of it, was not new to me; that it had been suggested to me by a gentleman of distinguished talents, to whose revision, as well as to that of many others, I had submitted my work long before it was published. I told him the name and character of this gentleman, which *must* have convinced him that there was no *wilful dissingenuity* in my reasonings. To the best of my remembrance, but I am not quite sure of this, I offered to let him see that gentleman's letter, containing the same objection which he (the anonymous author) had urged so strongly against my work; and told him, that the reason why that objection, and my answer to it, were not published in the appendix to my book, was, that the
author

author of the objection, when I asked his permission to publish it with my answer to it, did not choose to allow it to be published, being convinced *at once*, whenever he heard even the *beginning* of my answer to it, that he was mistaken on that point, that his objection was untenable, and that my answer to it was fair and complete.

I offered, if he would allow me, without ever knowing or enquiring about his name, of which I assured him I had no guess or suspicion, to correspond with him on the subject of his pamphlet, and to point out to him what I conceived to be the errors of his reasonings. I think I promised to him, that any objections or answers to his argument that I might give him in writing, should be such only as I was afterwards to print and publish; and that I should print nothing that he might give me in writing without his own express consent; and that I should return him his papers if he pleased.

After many weeks, I received an answer from my anonymous adversary, acknowledging the receipt of my letter, and my proposal *seemingly* so candid; telling me, that I might probably soon learn his name, and therefore inclosing a sealed paper containing his name, which paper he told me I might open, if I chose to carry on the correspondence which I had proposed.

Business much more interesting to myself than a philosophical controversy with an anonymous author, who seemed resolved, right or wrong, to put the most unfavourable construction possible on every thing that I said or did, worse even than I should have thought possible; and who chose to doubt of my candour (as I judged from his most characteristic adverb *seemingly*) when I made him the most unequivocally candid offer that one man could make to another, prevented me from writing to him for many months. Before I found leisure to write to him, I was informed, by his confidential friend, with his consent, of his name.

I had the honour of the company of them both together one day in my house, by invitation. I put into his hands his own sealed paper, containing his name, unopened, as I received it, that he might see I had made no improper use of that confidence which he had put in me. I had intended to send him back that paper unopened, along with the first specimen of my mode of replying to his pamphlet, and let him then choose whether he would let me know his name or not.

I put into his hands a few of many letters that I had received from different men of science, who had read my book before it was published, and who had given me their remarks on it ; such letters as *must* have convinced him that there was no dissingenuity or intended suppression or misrepresentation on my part, and *might* have convinced him that he, not I, was mistaken with respect to the import of a certain doctrine, about which we had differed strangely, while I endeavoured to refute, and he to maintain it. I suspect that if he did not see clearly, he at least had a glimpse of what was implied in those letters ; for though he had at first very candidly acknowledged the impropriety of his conduct, in publishing his pamphlet without allowing me previously to see it, I observed that he went no farther, and did not express any sense of having done me injustice, or of having fallen into any error in his own reasonings. Indeed he maintained so strict and cautious a reserve, that I could not have known, from any thing that he said, whether he even understood what I said to him on any one of the points about which we differed.

If I had observed this reserve on his part on one or two points only, I should have supposed that he really did not understand me, and of course should have endeavoured to explain and illustrate my meaning more fully than I did at first. But as his reserve was uniform on every point that became the subject of discourse, even on that great one which I had mentioned to him in my letter, which
had

had been anticipated by another gentleman, whose letter I shewed him, and which had been cleared up to that gentleman's satisfaction, by an explanation and answer, that I gave in the same very few words to my guests, as he had understood at once and been satisfied with, I judged that the reserve which I thought so remarkable was the result of prudence, and a resolution, which I could not blame, to make no rash concession.

As it would have been rude and inhospitable to urge my guest any farther on such a subject, I turned the discourse to other subjects at that time ; but, in a few weeks after, I gave him in writing a small and *gentle* specimen of the errors of his reasoning, carefully avoiding any mention of his violations of the fundamental principles of reasoning, and selecting for the subject of my remarks the most luminous passage in his pamphlet, the one which I presume he himself was most delighted with, and certainly the one which had afforded me the greatest entertainment. It was indeed such a passage as, if it had been introduced in a *viva voce* debate, and in an answer to which there could be no reply, would have been thought perfectly conclusive in point of argument, and an admirable specimen, not only of a lively imagination, but of great quickness and acuteness in reasoning.

It was a kind of parody, or very close imitation, of a peculiar mode of reasoning which I had employed, and in which the ablest men of my acquaintance, after considering it for several years, could find no error. The parody on it was evidently, what it was intended to be, stark nonsense ; yet the resemblance of it to my original serious argument was so close and perfect in every respect but one, and this one, though very important, so little obvious to any person who had not maturely considered the subject, that I am convinced the author of the pamphlet, and probably ninety-nine in the hundred of his readers, never once thought of it, or suspect-

ed that there was any omission in the lively and ludicrous parody on my reasoning.

As the subject was perfectly familiar to me, I perceived the omission before I had read two lines of his proposition, and could at once have explained to him, either in common or in mathematical language, what the difference was between his parody and my argument, and could have convinced him, that his must be nonsense, (which he meant it to be), even supposing mine to be a strict logical or mathematical demonstration.

This I did in the writing which I gave him, and which, after many months, he returned to me, with a reply precisely of the same kind, in point of reasoning, with his anonymous pamphlet. It contained another very close parody on my argument in my reply to him, but with the same defect or omission as in his former parody, and a repetition of his former violations of the best established principles of reasoning, with one or two additional specimens of the same kind, equally indisputable as it appeared to me, and equally characteristic of a great defect, not of understanding, but of education and knowledge.

As I had by that time gone too far to stop short with him, I resolved to shew him in one or two instances, or more if there should be occasion, what *indisputable* errors in point of reasoning he had committed. But first I took the precaution to hint to his friend separately, that I suspected my antagonist was very little acquainted with the principles of that kind of reasoning which he had endeavoured to employ. At this surmise his friend seemed much astonished, and no less indignant, and assured me *that* could not be: but on my asking him to come to my house next morning, and there shewing him his friend's written paper, and calling his attention to two particular passages in it, I had the pleasure to find, that he perceived the same errors in them which I had observed; and

and this he did without my having occasion to tell him what the errors were. One of those errors he did not observe at first, but on my begging him to substitute arithmetical numbers for the algebraical symbols that his friend had employed, just by way of illustration, and then to observe the result, he discovered the error immediately. The other error to which I wished to call his attention, he perceived at once, without any help or hint from me, though it certainly was less obvious than the former, as depending on a more abstruse general principle of science, which the writer had unknowingly violated.

Having learned by some years experience how to deal with such disputants, so as to bring them to a full point, in my next paper I pointed out to the author of the pamphlet the omission in his second parody, the impropriety of considering a parody as a proper answer to an argument, and some of the many gross violations of the fundamental principles of reasoning that he had committed; and concluded my rejoinder to him nearly in these words: "From
 " what I have said, you must be sensible that either you or I do
 " not know what strict logical and mathematical reasoning is.
 " What then, you may say, is to be done? Briefly this: consider
 " patiently what I have stated: if you think me right, say so at
 " once, like a man of sense and candour; if you think me wrong,
 " revise your own argument, make what corrections or improve-
 " ments in it you think necessary, and give it me in the form in
 " which you wish it to be published. I engage to print it exactly
 " in your own words, with my answer to it, on the principles
 " which you have seen."

This was the test which I had uniformly proposed to all those with whom I attempted to reason about my Essay, as the best or only proof that I could conceive of our arguing on both sides with candour and honest love of truth; not for victory or distinction, or from mere pride and obstinacy. With only one exception, and

this one of no consequence, it had invariably answered my purpose. Of many persons on whom I had occasion to try it, only one had such confidence in his objections, after seeing my answers to them, as to allow me to print them; and even this one would not put his name to his objections. Nor could I regard them as of any consequence; for not only there were very gross and indisputable errors in his reasonings, on one important point amounting to a perfect *Bull*, but there were in his discourse several determined misrepresentations of my argument.

My usual test succeeded perfectly with my antagonist, the author of the anonymous pamphlet; indeed it operated like a charm. In four and twenty hours I got back the papers, and along with them received from him a letter, in which he declined all further private correspondence with me, desired me to use what freedom I pleased with his printed pamphlet, but requested that his written papers might be committed to the flames. This request, of course, was instantly complied with; though in burning them I at the same time burned about a third part of my own answer to them, which, for the sake of easy and immediate reference, had been written on the alternate pages of his paper, that had by him been left blank.

This curious correspondence was going on between the months of January 1796 and October 1797. From that time to this my antagonist has not once spoken to me, or appeared even to know me when we met in the streets, as we have done very often; and I dare say he never will speak to me again: nor do I wish that he should; for though I bear him no ill-will, and should be very glad to have an opportunity to convince him of that by doing him any good office in my power, yet I hold myself indispensably bound, the more so for what I have here stated, to dissect and anatomise his pamphlet *secundum artem*. But it shall be done in such a manner, that he shall find neither suppression nor misrepresentation, nor any kind of dissingenuity in my discourse.

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His friend has not thought it necessary to carry his repentment quite so far ; we speak when we meet, but not on that tender subject ; and I had the pleasure of receiving a most edifying letter from him, along with the papers and the letter from the author of them desiring me to burn them, and declining all further correspondence with me. In this letter he (the friend of the author) had the goodness to tell me, that he thought the author perfectly right in every thing that he had written, and in declining all further intercourse with me, considering the tone of my last paper to him. This was the more edifying to me, that it seemed to imply his having discovered, that those very points were *right* which he had perceived or thought, as I had thought, to be notoriously and indisputably *wrong*.

Even from this brief account of our correspondence it may be judged, that those two gentlemen were not much disposed to hurt their consciences in order to gratify me ; and it may fairly be presumed, that they would rather have gone to the utmost limit that conscience would allow them to thwart and spite me. But what I have stated is not the worst of it : My Essay, which the author of the pamphlet chose to run his head against with so little ceremony, was in its nature and object the most provoking and unpardonable work that ever appeared in science. It was composed and published *avowedly*, not only to detect a favourite sophism, and an error in science, which many modern philosophers have maintained with the greatest arrogance, but also to expose them to reproach and ridicule, by shewing demonstrably that they had never believed it. In short, I undertook both to detect their sophism, and to convict them of falsehood. This had very generally been suspected, and even said ; but the means of proving it had not occurred to any person before me.

Conscious, on the one hand, that I meant only strictness and severity, but no injustice or dissingenuity, to any individual, or to
any

any set of men ; and perfectly aware, on the other hand, what general contempt and just reproach I must have brought on myself if I failed in my argument, and in the provoking inference which I deduced as a corollary from it ; or even if I did not allow my antagonists every possible opportunity of vindicating themselves, and refuting my argument ; I carefully, for many years, took all the precautions that I have already mentioned, and gave to those whom it concerned the most ample opportunities of vindicating themselves. But every experiment of this kind, while it was a sort of trial of the validity of my reasoning, was as certainly and directly a trial of the understanding and veracity of the person on whom it was made. It was really a trial, as they must generally have felt, whether they could even *attempt* to vindicate themselves, and refute my argument, without affording additional and most convincing proof of every thing that I had said unfavourable of them, either in point of judgment or candour. And this ungracious kind of test was the only proof I ever could expect to have from them that they found my reasoning valid, and my harsh inference with respect to them just and irrefragable ; for, supposing me to have been right in every respect, and them to have been sensible of it, I was sure they would never acknowledge it.

But the author of the anonymous pamphlet stood in a very peculiar situation, and the worst of all.

Notwithstanding his own confident general assertions of his belief, I could easily have vindicated him in point of veracity, by shewing, even on the evidence of the particulars stated in his own pamphlet, that the doctrine for which he contended so strenuously was not the one which I had undertaken to refute ; and consequently, that my arguments and conclusions did not in the least affect him or his reasonings. Nay, I was ready to have told him, that I should never dispute, and that if, on mature deliberation, he thought it worth while to contend for his own doctrine, or
thought

thought it of any consequence, I should admit it in its full extent, as stated by himself. But such vindication of his veracity must have been most grievously at the expence of his knowledge and understanding; for, in the first place, I must have shewn that he had never understood that doctrine of which he was proud to declare himself an apostle, and had not even known the fundamental principle of it; secondly, I must have shewn him that his own doctrine was a perfectly nugatory proposition, as involving a condition that never was and never can be realised; just like the vulgar saying, "when the sky falls we shall catch larks:" so that though, strictly speaking, as a proposition it *must* be either *true* or *false*, and, in my opinion, would be *true*, yet it never could be tried or verified as a matter of fact; and, if it were verified, never could be of the smallest consequence in science, or even interfere with the proposition which I had undertaken to demonstrate. This, indeed, was so obviously implied in the answer which I had mentioned to him, as what I had given to another person who had stated the same supposed objection to my reasoning, that I can scarce doubt that he perceived it, and on this account did not choose to have any further discussion about it. Thirdly, All the mortifying remarks on his violations of the principles of reasoning or science which he had to expect from me, must have come upon him with tenfold force, when it appeared that he had been contending for next to nothing, or, at best, for he knew not what.

In short, I do not believe it possible for any combination of circumstances to have occurred tending more to irritate two men against a third, of whom they previously had an unfavourable opinion, and whom they wished to mortify, and expose to public reproach and contempt.

It was impossible that they should have expected any favour or kindness from me, or should have supposed that any good was intended to them, or could be done to them by my Memorial. Nay, they

they would have had some excuse, which neither Mr John Bell nor any of his adherents could have, for doing me the injustice (and very great injustice it would have been to me) of supposing that I had some personal ill-will to them, and that I wished to do them an injury, by excluding them from attending in the Infirmary.

Yet, in these most trying circumstances, they have had the magnanimity to sacrifice all considerations of private resentment and dislike, and to support me zealously in an undertaking which they *knew* to be right, and for the public good. This conduct has raised them much in my opinion: and it is fit I should say so; for if they had acted otherwise, I should have been strongly tempted to impute their opposition to their animosity against me, not to any honest difference of opinion with respect to the subject of my Memorial. Both of them had received a great part of their education as clerks in the Royal Infirmary, and must have known the truth of all that I had stated, and of many painful particulars which I should be very sorry to be obliged to state.

I regard their conduct on this occasion as a very high degree of virtue; the more to be esteemed that such examples are rare: while too frequent experience must convince us all, that many persons cannot divest themselves of personal animosity, even in the exercise of an important public trust, or in the discharge of the most sacred duty.

Another passage in those letters, which Mr John Bell has very wisely prefixed to his answer to my Memorial, deserves some animadversion. It is in his own circular letter to those younger Surgeons who had employed him to write that answer. It is in these words: “ The opinion of the *profession* has been publicly and “ strongly expressed. The *constitutional* point has been *decided* by “ *repeated votes* of the Royal College of Surgeons.”

The former of these propositions is unquestionably true in its full extent; perhaps to nearly double that extent which Mr John Bell wished

wished to be understood or known. For not only one opinion, that one I mean which he had in view, but another opinion also, diametrically opposite and contradictory to it, has been *publicly* and *strongly* expressed, by the *Profession*, as he calls it, that is, by the Surgeons of Edinburgh. No fewer than *fourteen* out of *twenty-nine* Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, who were present at a memorable debate and vote of that College, on the subject of their mode of attendance in the Infirmary, expressed *publicly* and *strongly* an opinion perfectly coinciding with mine, and *protested* against the opposite opinion, that of the fifteen other Fellows, as irreconcilable with the good of the patients. Of these fourteen many are men of the highest eminence that have ever been of their profession in this city, and have long enjoyed the greatest share of public esteem and confidence; and all of them are thoroughly acquainted with the subject, and with many particulars of those evils which I had stated only in general terms. Many of them had received their education in the Infirmary as clerks; and almost all of them had attended and operated in their turn, some of them repeatedly. All of them must often have been eye-witnesses of those evils, the knowledge of which, as resulting from the system of rotation, made them so emphatically declare it bad for the sick poor. But of this more fully afterwards: at present I shall only observe, that though those gentlemen, whose opinion publicly and strongly declared Mr John Bell seems to hold as nothing, when taken by *tal*e were the minority of their College, at that ever memorable meeting, in the proportion of fourteen to fifteen; yet I humbly conceive, that if taken by *weight* they would have been the majority of it, in the proportion of at least four to one.

The latter of the two sentences quoted from Mr John Bell's circular letter is hardly intelligible. I cannot even guess why, or in what sense, the subject of their debates and votes should be called a *constitutional* point. With infinitely more propriety, and some ra-

tional meaning, it might have been called osteological, or cutaneous, muscular, or sanguinary ; for it is plain that it concerns much more nearly the bones, and skin, and flesh, and blood, of the sick poor, than it does the constitution of this country, according to the meaning usually attached to the phrase *constitutional point*.

But be the point constitutional or sanguinary, or what they choose to call it, for I hate to dispute about words, I have not the honour to understand how, or in what possible sense, it can be said to have been *decided* by repeated votes of the Royal College of Surgeons. It is the very first time I knew that any body supposed that a party in a cause was to *decide* that cause, or any one point of it, by his own vote, however often repeated. To me it appears, that the Royal College of Surgeons, by their repeated votes, had only *decided* that they would try that point ; in plain English, that they would go to law ; which, in general, is thought by no means a difficult problem. It has by many people been found much easier to get *into* a lawsuit than to get *out* of one.

—————*In regna Lavini*

Dardanidæ venient ; mitte hanc de pectore curam :

Sed non et venisse volent. Bella, horrida Bella,

Et Tybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno.

It is wonderful that Mr John Bell, who has got at his command a vast superfluity of texts of Scripture, as appears by his applying them so lavishly on all occasions, to the purpose and not to the purpose, should have overlooked, or not understood, the well known text of the Apostle Paul ; “ Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to “ them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion over “ a man as long as he liveth ? ” I trust our Edinburgh lawyers will give him and his clients a good commentary on that text.

That the Royal College of Surgeons should have determined
(even

(even by that very small majority) to dispute the point with the Managers, and to contend for the bargain of 1738, was matter of surprise and sorrow to many others as well as to me. It is impossible not to speculate a little about it, and try to form some conjectures about the cause of such a marvellous phenomenon; the more marvellous surely that they have publicly and strongly disavowed the only reasons which their predecessors *assigned*, or, as I firmly believe, *bad*, for making that odious bargain with the Managers; I mean, the prospect of great improvement to the younger members of their College, by their being allowed to practise in the Infirmary; and preserving an equality among the Surgeons, by preventing a few of them from acquiring high improvement and reputation, and a large share of the most lucrative practice, in consequence of their permanent attendance, and daily performing of operations in the Hospital.

The most obvious account of so strange a phenomenon is this. It appears, from their conduct and their printed memorial, that about the time when that bargain was made, the Devil had taken full possession of a large majority of the Corporation of Surgeons; and that he had endowed them plenteously with his own malignant spirit. Further, it appears by what passed thirty years after, in the course of the long contest between the Managers of the Infirmary and the Corporation of Surgeons, that the Devil still kept possession of the latter, or at least of a great majority of them, as his own peculiar flock. Even so lately as 1792, when Dr Duncan made an attempt to get that horrible abuse corrected, against which I remonstrate, it is plain from the "*terrib'e noise*" which some of them began to make, that the Devil was still in them, and by no means disposed to go out of them. Now, these things being so, it is very natural to suppose, that the same evil spirit still continued in them, and had descended unimpaired from Mr Kennedy to some of his worthy successors; just as we read in Scripture, that when a

great prophet of old was taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire, his spirit as well as his mantle descended to his humble follower. “ And when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither ; and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets, which were to view at Jericho, saw him, they said, “ The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.”

It is so reasonable, on all occasions, to impute every thing that is peculiarly bad to the immediate agency of the Devil, and this account of the matter, in the present case, is so obvious and plausible, that every body would admit it at once as satisfactory and certain, were it not for some considerations which I have already stated. But these have so much weight, that they make me doubt, or more than doubt, of that most natural account of the business, and suggest to me another explanation of it, which I am convinced will be found the true one.

Before my Memorial was printed, or indeed written, I had learned, by conversing with some of the most eminent of the Surgeons, that they reprobated the system of their attendance in the Hospital by rotation, and the bargain, and the subsequent conduct of their predecessors, as much as I did. It was impossible not to presume the same of other gentlemen of the same education and profession, and who must have had equal knowledge of those facts on which that opinion was founded.

Even when disappointed in this expectation, I had the pleasure to perceive, that no body attempted to adopt or vindicate the principles and arguments on which Mr Kennedy and his associates rested their claim. This implied, that all the present Members of the College of Surgeons perceived the turpitude of the fordid cruel principles on which their predecessors had acted, and which they had avowed ; in other words, that all the present Members were men of more humane and liberal sentiments and manners than their predecessors.

deceffors had been. It was not eafy to conceive how or why they fhould contend for the bargain itfelf, when none of them could avow the principles on which it was made. But this is fully explained, and well illuftrated, by the conduct of Mr John Bell, and chiefly by the card which he did me the honour to addrefs to me, when he had only heard of my Memorial, but had not read it. From that card, which is printed in this paper, (page 34. to 36.), it appears indisputably, that if he had been acting as an individual, upon his own judgment and knowledge, he would have left the decifion of the bufinefs to the Managers, as the conduct moft becoming a gentleman, and as efpecially proper in a professional man.

I prefume with confidence, that every one of his adherents or clients who have employed him to write for them, if he had been acting for himfelf, unconnected with any party, and not in oppofition to any, would have thought and acted juft as Mr John Bell had wifely refolved to do. Indeed it is incredible that any individual, acting for himfelf fingly, fhould have engaged in fuch a difpute, or contended for fuch a bargain.

I fhall take the liberty to ftate an imaginary, but very conceivable cafe, and to confider what the probable or certain refult of it would have been. I fhall fuppofe that (the Devil having entered into them) all the Members of the *opposite* party in the College of Surgeons, Mefrs. Allan, Benjamin and George Bell, Bennett, Brown, Inglis, Latta, Law, Newbigging, Rae, Ruffell, Thomfon, Wardrop, Andrew Wood, had refolved keenly and rigoroufly to infift upon the bargain of 1738. Can we believe, that in this cafe Mr John Bell and his clients fhould individually have done violence to their own clear judgment, (perhaps I ought to add confcience too), and joined cordially with a fet of men with whom they have long been engaged in the moft inveterate warfare? Or fhall we fuppofe that they would all have acted according to the beft of their judgment, and
 ftill

still preserved their opposition to their adverse party, by cordially supporting the measure which I had recommended?

The latter supposition appears to me abundantly probable; the more so, that the former is absolutely incredible, and inconsistent with any competent knowledge of human nature. Party-men, of any spirit and talents, would rather see their opponents hanged, than unite with them in doing what they know to be right; *a fortiori*, then, much rather than unite with them in doing what they know to be wrong.

On the whole, therefore, I think I have much reason to believe, that the conduct of Mr John Bell and his clients, on this occasion, does not proceed from any undue influence of the old Serpent of the days of Deacon Kennedy and Co. but from the noble spirit of party; that spirit to which we owe our greatest orators, and patriots, and statesmen, and, in a great measure, our glorious Constitution itself. The only doubt that now remains is, whether this noble spirit of party may not be the Devil in disguise: but this will soon be ascertained; for though it is well known that he can assume any shape he pleases, it is also well known, and very lucky it is, that he cannot conceal his cloven foot.

A MUCH more pleasing subject of animadversion, or rather of admiration and praise, comes next under review; I mean the very judicious and skilful manner in which Mr John Bell has acquitted himself, and the extraordinary talents that he has displayed, in his newly assumed character of an Advocate, and in the conduct of a very difficult and most ungracious cause, in which he engaged with reluctance, and against his own original and better judgment.

Experienced Lawyers, and Judges, (who know it to their sorrow), need not be told, but the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, who
are

are not much accustomed to be addressed as judges, and who probably have not fully perceived the plan and merit of his argument, ought to be informed, that the great point in arguing any cause, and especially such a cause as Mr John Bell has undertaken, and consequently the greatest merit that a lawyer *can* have, is to avoid, as much as possible, entering into the merits of the cause, which might be very dangerous for his clients; and to enlarge on any thing, or every thing, that has no connection with it. This gives full scope to a lawyer's genius, and never fails to raise him greatly in the opinion of his brethren and of the public; and it is very much *in commodum curiæ*; by convincing people how unfit they are to argue their own causes.

I have no doubt that Mr John Bell would, by his own natural sagacity, have discovered this great principle of all juridical eloquence, without the aid of any information or instruction, or hint or example; and that, by the mere force of his own genius, he would, even in his first attempt, have carried that most valuable kind of eloquence to the highest possible perfection. But he hath followed so closely the noble pattern of such legal eloquence given by that most authentic traveller and profound philosopher *Lemuel Gulliver*, that it is more than probable he had that model in view; and he could not have chosen a better. But when we consider also, that he is well acquainted with Gulliver's travels, as appears from his answer to me, and that the model of juridical eloquence is given in the voyage to the land of *Houyhnhms*; and that Mr John Bell must have been fully aware what he owed to so respectable a set of *Yahoos* as the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, to whom his argument was addressed, there can be no doubt what his model was.

In justice to him, and that the Managers, and all whom it concerns, may see how faithfully he has imitated, and how much he has surpassed his justly admired original, I shall transcribe *Gulliver's*

OWN

own words, before I quote the parallel passages in Mr John Bell's answer to me.

" I assured his Honour, that *law* was a science in which I had not much conversed, further than by employing advocates in vain upon some injustices that had been done me; however, I would give him all the satisfaction I was able.

" I said there was a society of men among us, bred up from their youth in the art of proving by words, multiplied for the purpose, that *white* is *black*, and *black* is *white*, according as they are paid. To this society all the rest of the people are *slaves*. For example, if my neighbour have a mind to my *cow*, he hires a lawyer to prove that he ought to have my *cow* from me. I must then hire another to defend my right, it being against all rules of *law* that any man should be allowed to speak for himself. Now, in this case I, who am the right owner, lie under two great disadvantages; first, My *lawyer*, being practised almost from his cradle in defending falsehood, is quite out of his element when he would be an advocate for justice, which is an unnatural office he always attempts with great awkwardness, if not with ill-will. The second disadvantage is, that my *lawyer* must proceed with great caution, or else he will be reprimanded by the *judges*, and abhorred by his brethren, as one that would lessen the practice of the law." — " In pleading, they studiously avoid entering into the *merits* of the cause; but are loud, violent, and tedious, in dwelling upon all circumstances which are not to the purpose. For instance, in the case already mentioned, they never desire to know what claim or title my adversary hath to my *cow*, but whether the said cow were red or black, her horns long or short, whether the field I graze her in be round or square, whether she was milked at home or abroad, what diseases she is subject to, and the like; after which they consult *precedents*, adjourn the cause from

" time

“ time to time, and in ten, twenty, or thirty years come to an
“ issue.”

It is delightful to observe how admirably Mr John Bell has availed himself of these precious instructions. I doubt much whether the oldest or the ablest lawyers at the bar could have done the business nearly as well.

The *merits* of the cause depended on the validity of a certain agreement or pretended contract between the Surgeons and the Managers, which I conceive to be illegal and null, as being a violation of the charter of the Infirmary, as well as inconsistent with the good of the sick poor; and which, if it had been originally valid, has been repeatedly and grossly violated by the Surgeons. To these considerations may be added, on the part of Mr John Bell, his avowed purpose of doing away (what he is pleased to call) those gross misrepresentations of the character and conduct of the younger Surgeons, contained in my Memorial.

As it would be tedious and laborious, and very unnecessary, to transcribe and comment on *every* splendid passage in his Answer, which may justly be regarded as a good sample of his genius for the practice of the law, I shall select only a few, I trust, of the best of them.

He has some admirable remarks on my *stature*, my *dress*, especially my volunteer uniform, and my grenadier cap, at the hirsute appearance of which he seems to have taken umbrage, and on my writing Latin.

“ Born in Brobdignag, and educated in Laputa, he despises us
“ as contemptible beings, inferior in size of intellects, and in bulk
“ of body. He steps over and over us, in all the pride of his gi-
“ gantic stature; and lifts aside the lappets of his coat, to let us
“ pass unhurt beneath the stride of his colossal limbs.” *Sett. I.*

page 44.

“ Though the Memorial is now a common property to all the
O “ world,

“ world, it is particularly addressed to his fellow-citizens and fellow-
 “ soldiers ; for he is a soldier, “ in red, tremendous, and hirsute in
 “ gold.” His Memorial has been distributed by tuck of drum to
 “ all the officers of this corps. Much of the wit is addressed to
 “ them, and all of it is at least level to the plainest understanding.”

Seet. 1. page 23, 24.

“ Of the elegance with which he writes the English language,
 “ we have just given such specimens as must surely satisfy the
 “ most rigorous critic ; but Latin he writes still more fluently, and
 “ fluency is every thing in telling of tales.

“ *Latin to him's no more difficile,*

“ *Than to a blackbird 'tis to whistle.*”

Seet. 1. page 23.

Not content with all these and many more remarks, equally pertinent and witty, on me personally, he proceeds to make many remarks, almost equally pertinent, on my Father, and his character and writings ; and draws an admirable contrast between him and me. *Page 50, 51.*

He does not even confine himself to me and my Father, but contrives, with exquisite skill, to bring in some allusion to my family-history ; and to mention the number of my Ancestors who had been Professors, (and full three times more than that number ; but of this afterwards).

———“ An author, distinguished in the literary and polemical
 “ world, the *fifteenth* in a direct line of a dynasty of Professors. No
 “ wonder that little men crouch under the hereditary sceptre, wield-
 “ ed by his gigantic arm.” *Page 44.*

Every one of these specimens is an unquestionable proof of superior genius. Men of ordinary talents would think it of no moment, with respect to the subject of my Memorial, and Mr John

Bell's

Bell's answer to it, whether my ancestors were Professors or Ploughmen ; whether my Father and I were just of the same character or not ; whether I wrote Latin, or English, or broad Scotch ; whether I occasionally wore a red coat or a black gown, a fur cap or a three-cornered hat ; and whether I am six feet high, or only four.

But as this last point has appeared of such consequence to Mr John Bell, it is proper to consider it fully, and to endeavour, if possible, to set him right as to some things about which he seems to be mistaken ; especially to satisfy him, that by my stature I never meant any injury or indignity to him or to his friends, whose bodies bear no reasonable proportion to the great souls which they contain ; as by the whole tenor of his discourse he seems to have supposed that I did.

It must be owned, that we often see a very unequal distribution of soul and body. But I can by no means admit the doctrine which some very little philosophers are eager to maintain, that the souls of men always are inversely as the cubes of their statures ; for I have never seen any demonstration of this important proposition. I rather incline to the old orthodox opinion, so ably maintained by that great philosopher and judge of human nature Serjeant Kite, That he who was born to be six feet high, was born to be a great man. I am even interested to maintain this doctrine in all its purity, as *that* is the only kind of greatness to which I make any pretensions, and the only one that I am sure no body will or can deny me. But I never thought of using that greatness to the annoyance of little men, or little great men, or of undervaluing them for their diminutive bodies. Nay, though of late I have added to my stature one cubit, by means of that unlucky grenadier-cap, the hirsute appearance of which seems to have irritated Mr John Bell more than I could have supposed, I must assure him solemnly, that it was not for the foolish and presumptuous purpose of making myself look

greater, nor yet for the malicious purpose of making him and other little great men look less, than nature intended we should do. It was purely for the good of my country ; and accordingly, as soon as my country shall have no further occasion for the services of the said hirsute cap, I shall lay it aside with much more pleasure than ever I put it on.

Every body in the least acquainted with Mr John Bell must perceive and acknowledge at once, as I do, that he has foul enough, or more than enough, to animate four and twenty of the largest of his Majesty's Beef-eaters. No wonder that so large a foul should be somewhat restless and impatient, and even indignant, at being impounded in so small, so very small a body. *Æstuat infelix angusto limite.* And I think no body can blame it, I am sure I do not, for being a little snappish sometimes, when it sees a parcel of great men-mountains, or rather flesh-mountains, walking about, with scarce foul enough in them to serve the purpose of salt, and keep them from putrefying.

All the great poets, ancient and modern, from Homer down to Milton, have shewn a strong partiality to heroes of the largest grenadier size. Milton, in particular, carried this partiality to a most extravagant pitch. But the faithful page of authentic history must convince every judicious and candid reader, that many of the greatest men in all ages have been of small stature. Alexander the Great, Augustus, Prince Eugene of Savoy, the Archduke Charles, Dumourier, nay Buonaparte himself, all have been little men. The greatest hero that ever England has produced was of the smallest size of any that we read of in true history. I do not mean Lord Nelson, though certainly a very great hero and a little man ; but one much greater, and still smaller, of whom we read in the Tragedy of Tragedies, which bears his name.

Though

*Though small his body be, so very small
 A chairman's leg is more than twice as big,
 Yet is his soul as any mountain great;
 And as a mountain once contain'd a mouse,
 So doth this mouse contain a mighty mountain.
 Let Macedonia her Alexander boast;
 Let Rome her Cæsars and her Scipios show;
 Ireland her Os, her Macs let Scotland boast;
 England shall boast no other than Tom Thumb!*

But, unfortunately, he was cut off in the flower of his youth, and in his full career of glory, by the most calamitous and horrible fate that ever yet befell a mortal hero: he was swallowed by a red cow. *Spesta juvenis, et omen quidem Dii prohibeant; cæterum in ea tempora natus es, quibus firmare animum expediat constantibus exemplis.*

NEXT to that essential merit so well explained by Gulliver, and so admirably exemplified by Mr John Bell in his Answer to my Memorial, without which it is plain there could be no pleadings or law-papers worth hearing or reading, the most important qualification that an advocate can have, is the talent of availing himself to the utmost of every *fact*, true or false, credible or incredible, possible or impossible, with which he is furnished; telling it in the best manner, placing it in the strongest light, adorning it with the choicest flowers of eloquence, enforcing it with many strokes of the sublime and pathetic, such as may rouse the most stupid understanding, and melt the hardest and coldest heart; and finally, deducing from every fact so stated those inferences which may serve his

his purpose, whether such deductions be consistent with, or repugnant to the rules of logic, and the suggestions of common sense.

The truth or falsity of those facts, with respect to the advocate, and the merit of his argument, are quite out of the question. If every fact which he states were as false as Mahomet's Alcoran, he cannot in the least be blamed for that: on the contrary, he may be well entitled to the highest praise, for making the best use of such *bad* facts; and if he should think it worth his while to do any thing so uncivil and unprofitable, he would be well entitled to blame very much those who furnished him with such *bad* facts: in other words, if he chose to play the fool, he would have an excellent opportunity of quarrelling with his best friends, I mean his clients, and their attornies, or agents, of whatever denomination. But this, I believe, is very seldom thought of, and much seldomer done; for every body knows that an advocate is not answerable for the truth of his facts, in point of veracity, like a witness, who, unless he be well paid for not doing it, ought to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. An advocate is employed, and generally paid, not for telling the truth, but for saying all that he thinks can avail his client. Nor is a lawyer in any degree answerable, like a judge, or a jurymen, in point of understanding or probity, for the belief which he gives, or appears to give, to the facts in his client's case.

It is plainly the business of judges and jurymen, and of the opposite counsel, to find out, if they can, whether the facts stated be true or false; and generally it is the business of the advocate who states them to prevent that from being found out, if he can. At any rate, every body knows that truth lies in a well; a very deep one it should seem; for there are but few people the deep-sea lead of whose understanding can reach even half way to the bottom of it. It would therefore be very foolish for an advocate to throw away a great deal of time and pains in sounding or diving for that
same

same truth, which forty to one he will not discover, and which, if he should unfortunately lay hold of it, he would be fain to let go in a trice, as finding it more cumbersome and dangerous than a mill-stone about his neck.

But in any kind of fine writing, as approaching to the nature of poetry, the sacred right *quidlibet audendi*, is, if possible, still more extensively and more firmly established; for the best of all possible reasons, that any great solicitude about truth, or very strict adherence to it even when known, would completely frustrate the chief object of such composition, which, in general, is rather *delectare* than *prodesse*.

Thus, surely every reader of good taste and judgment must be sensible, that the Iliad of Homer is a much nobler work than a complete collection of all the gazettes extraordinary that were published at Sparta and Mycenæ during the whole ten years of the Trojan war; and that the Odyssæy and the Æneid are much better than the original journals of Ulysses and Æneas.

These general remarks on the nature and value of the facts generally stated in pleadings and memorials, and other law or law-like papers, and of the merit of an able advocate, in making an admirable use of very bad facts, I have taken the liberty to suggest to the Managers, before I point out to them a few of the many exquisite instances of that kind of merit which are to be met with in Mr John Bell's answer to my Memorial, and which, without some such preliminary explanation, they might scarce have understood, or admired as they ought to do.

If his answer had been addressed to experienced lawyers and judges, especially if it had been in the form of a pleading by word of mouth, any such explanation of the merit of it, or of the principles on which the merit of it ought to be estimated, would have been unnecessary, and even impertinent. The merit of every sentence of it would have been perceived and acknowledged at once, and very soon.

soon would have been suitably rewarded. If he had been a young lawyer, instead of being a young, or not a young Surgeon, and had pronounced such a Philippic in the form of a pleading in any of the courts of Westminster Hall, he would have been complimented by the Bench, admired and hated by the Bar, worshipped by the Attornies, and in four and twenty hours would have received at least four and twenty briefs, and twice as many retaining fees ; for in the noble profession of the law, such superior genius is soon and certainly and amply rewarded, with much solid pudding, as well as with abundance of empty praise ; while in all the branches of our miserable trade of Physic (including Surgery) the same superior genius, though more admired, is scarce more liberally rewarded than plain truth and common honesty. *Laudatur et alget* is too often the fate of both. To say the truth, that superior genius does not appear to be of so much use in any branch of physic as it is in the practice of the law ; for when a man is very ill of the asthma and dropsy, or going to be cut for the stone, it is of no consequence to him whether his physician or surgeon has or has not all the qualifications which would make an excellent Attorney-general ; and it is of great consequence to him that his physician or surgeon should have certain other qualifications, of a totally different nature.

Though judges and lawyers, and all mankind who have occasion to know them, are always very liberal of their praises and admiration of such pleadings as Mr John Bell's answer to me, yet, in point of belief, they pay no more regard to the facts stated in them, even to those the most in point, than they do to the facts stated in Homer's Iliad, or in a London newspaper. Of course, all the fine inferences from those facts must go for nothing. Indeed, if the judges were ever so *willing* to believe *all* the *facts* which able lawyers state in their pleadings, they *cannot* do it : For the facts stated by the opposite lawyers are sometimes directly contradictory ; so that if those on the one side be true, those on the other must be false ; and
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if the former are false, the latter must be true. Sometimes the facts stated on the opposite sides are only inconsistent, so that only *some* of them *can* be *true*, but *all* of them *may* be *false*, and most of them in some cases are so.

Hence comes the necessity of what is called *evidence*, to entitle even the most striking and pointed facts which a lawyer states in his pleading to any credit. Now, evidence is in some cases of a very stubborn nature; and so untractable, that, when rashly produced, it establishes incontestably the reverse of what it was intended to prove. And a good deal of experience and acquired dexterity is necessary, to enable a lawyer to avoid stating any facts the reverse of which may be *easily* proved; for example, by their inconsistency with authentic record, with themselves, or with one another, or with common sense. Mere force of genius can never inspire a young pleader with this necessary caution; on the contrary, the ardour inseparable from great genius will naturally urge him to the very opposite conduct, especially in his first attempts.

Such, I conceive, has been the case with Mr John Bell as to *some* of the most striking facts, and those on which he seems to have laid the greatest stress, in his answer to me.

With peculiar pleasure I give, as the first specimen of this kind, one short sentence, which contains four such facts; or may fairly be resolved into four separate propositions, the direct contrary of every one of which may be easily and incontestably proved.

This admirable specimen of his superior genius occurs in the 49th page of his 2d section; where, after declaiming with more than Ciceronian or Demosthenic fire and eloquence against the horrible abomination of Clinical Lectures, especially when conducted by Professors who are young men, and asserting roundly, that "the Chairs of this University are filled with young men, very young men," he states more particularly the following *facts*.

“ The Professorships of Chemistry, Anatomy, Midwifery, and
 “ Materia Medica, are filled with men younger than the youngest
 “ of those whom this gentleman thinks fit to describe as young and
 “ inexperienced Surgeons.”

First, as to the Professor of Midwifery ; for he stands in a different situation from the other three professors : He neither has, nor can have, any thing to do with the clinical lectures ; so that whether he be only five years of age, or fifty-five, cannot concern the Infirmary. Besides, it is now several years since the Infirmary was safely delivered of him and his big-bellied patients, to the great joy of the noble family. This happy delivery was accomplished in the time of the father and immediate predecessor of the present incumbent ; not in consequence of any proof or suspicion of insufficiency on his part, but purely on the strong general principle of what the Managers knew to be right ; what they might have foreseen, but had really not foreseen, when they permitted a lying-in ward in the Hospital ; and were convinced of at last by very ample experience. But waving all such discussions, I shall here consider only Mr John Bell's *fact*, that the Professor of Midwifery is *younger* than the *youngest* of those whom I described as young and inexperienced Surgeons.

What the age of several of the Junior Surgeons is, I really do not know ; but I know that one of them is just four and twenty, he having been born in February 1777. As there are no fewer than six Junior Surgeons under him in the list of that Royal College, I think it probable that some of these may be still younger men. But taking, what I am sure of, four and twenty as the age of one of the youngest Surgeons, I shall consider whether it be credible or possible that the Professor of Midwifery is younger than that, even by a day.

The present Professor of Midwifery has been a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians for *nine* years, as may be supposed very
 generally

generally known, for his name appears the last on our list of Fellows prefixed to the last edition of our Dispensatory, which is dated the 17th of April 1792. Before he could have been made a Fellow, he must have been a Licentiate of our College; and before he was made a Licentiate, he had obtained the degree of Doctor of Medicine from the University of St Andrew's. If he be younger than four and twenty at present, he *must* have been a Doctor of Physic, and a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh, at or before the age of fifteen. This appears to me incredible at least, if not impossible. But perhaps these facts may not have been known to Mr John Bell and his clients: at least some other facts relating to that gentleman's history, and still stronger, *must* have been well known to Mr John Bell, and probably to many of his clients. Before he became a Physician, and a Fellow of our College, he had been for between three and four years a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. Before he was admitted a Fellow of their College, (which was on the 23d of June 1788), he had completed his education as a Surgeon, had been examined by their examiners, had been approved of, and (according to Mr John Bell's own doctrine, strongly asserted in his answer to me) *must* have been perfectly well qualified to act as ordinary Surgeon of this Hospital. In fact he did attend, in his turn, in that capacity. All these things I conceive *must* have been well known to Mr John Bell, who became a Member of the College of Surgeons on the 14th of August 1786, near two years before the present Professor of Midwifery, and must have been accustomed to hear the name of the latter called next but one after his own, at every meeting of their College, for at least three years and a half. If he be at this time only four and twenty, he *must* have been a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1788, thirteen years ago, at the age of eleven, forasmuch as eleven and thirteen make twenty-four; and he must have acted in his turn as ordinary Sur-

geon of this Infirmary at some period between the age of eleven and that of fifteen; at which latter age (according to Mr John Bell's *fact*, and the plain undeniable arithmetical calculation founded on it) he ceased to be a Surgeon and became a Physician. This inference appears to me incredible; but it is plain that Mr John Bell and his clients must either admit it, or give up their own important fact.

Next, as to the Professor of Chemistry. Though I know his age pretty exactly, I do not choose to mention it too particularly, for he is still a bachelor; but I trust not long to remain in that sinful state. I shall therefore only say, that for his own sake, and much more for that of the University of Edinburgh, I hope and trust he is some years on the right side of forty. I can perceive no deficiency either of years or understanding in him; nor consequently can I think it necessary (though certainly it can do no harm) to pray to Jupiter to increase his wisdom and his beard. For my present purpose it is sufficient to observe, that he has now been six winters Professor of Medicine and Chemistry in this University, to which he was invited (as Dr Cullen and Dr Black had been before him) in consequence of the well-merited reputation that he had acquired in the University of Glasgow, where he had taught first chemistry, and afterwards medicine, for eight winters before, and where he had been Physician to the Infirmary from the time when it was built till he left that city. I should therefore presume that he might be trusted with the charge of twenty or thirty patients in this Infirmary, without any injury or any great risk to them. But be this as it may, it is at least plain, that if he be only four and twenty at present, he must have been but ten, or between ten and eleven years of age, when he first taught chemistry in the University of Glasgow, near fourteen years ago. Thus I think we may safely dispose of another of the four *facts*.

As to the Professor of *Materia Medica*, the *fact* with respect to him may be still more easily and briefly settled. Far from believing that he is younger than the youngest of the Surgeons in Edinburgh, I doubt much whether all of these gentlemen had got into breeches when he was a Doctor of Physic. He took his degree of M. D. in this University September 12. 1781, full nineteen years and a half ago; so that if he be only four and twenty at present, he *must* have been made a Doctor of Physic by us before he was five years of age.

The fourth of the facts contained in that short sentence of Mr John Bell's paper which I am here considering, must be understood to relate, not to Dr Monro senior, but to his son Dr A. Monro junior, who has lately been appointed his father's colleague and successor. Fortune seems indeed to have been wonderfully unfavourable to Mr John Bell and his clients on this occasion; for even this fourth fact, the only one which had any appearance of being true, and which, on the fair principle of chance, should have been *for* him, turns out *against* him. I find, on enquiry, that even Dr Alexander Monro junior is between three and four years past the age of four and twenty. Nor has fortune been much more favourable to him in another *fact* stated in the same paragraph, (page 50.), in these words: " Yet we cannot refrain from observing, that the *youngest* of these Professors, the Professors of *Materia Medica* and Chemistry, do honour to the University." That these two Professors do honour to the University, I cannot dispute; but they certainly are not the *youngest* of the four Professors whom he has specified. The youngest of them is older by several years than the young Professor of Anatomy.

Perhaps I should have done better to have begun with the first sentence of that paragraph, (page 49 of section 2.); for it is scarce inferior in rhetorical or poetical merit to the one which I have analysed. These are the words of it: " It happens that, at this very
 " time,

“ time, *the Chairs* of this University are filled with *young men*, very “ *young*” men.

Of these *young*, *very young* men, it happens at this time that several are between sixty and seventy years of age, many more between fifty and sixty, and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, a great majority are past forty years of age. At present there are but *two*, and when Mr John Bell’s pamphlet was written there was only *one*, out of five and twenty Professors, under thirty years of age. I cannot tell exactly, nor is it of much consequence, but I guess, that the average of the age of the present Professors must be nearer fifty than forty. Now, as the age of man is but threescore years and ten, I humbly conceive that, without any violent breach of Christian charity, we may rather be deemed middle aged than *young*, or *very young* men, at least when taken collectively.

As to myself personally, I gladly admit, on the authority of Mr John Bell, that I am an exception to the general rule; and most gratefully acknowledge my obligations to him for the compliment which he has had the goodness to pay me, in his forefaid 49th page, in these words: “ Dr Gregory himself, *but a young man*, “ boasts of having occupied a most important station in it for “ twenty-four years.” This very just observation is the more valuable, that it comes from one who evidently had no favour or partiality to me; and was the more acceptable, that I had been for some time much disquieted in mind, in consequence of having heard, that many very intelligent and experienced ladies had declared, (*horresco referens*), that every man of five and forty ought to be hanged.

I cannot therefore but lament, as well as wonder, that his bad luck, with respect to matters of fact, should have attended him even on that point. By the happiest conceit that ever entered into the head of a mortal wight, he states the miserable contrast between me and my Father, (sect. 1. page 50, 51.) There, after a suitable preamble,

preamble, he gives an excellent quotation from my Father's well-known Lectures on the Office and Duties of a Physician ; and thus proceeds : " Serious duties will beget serious thoughts ; but they must be long familiar in the mind before they can be thus happily expressed. One plain word of this *good old man* marks a feeling mind more than all the effusions of sensibility that Sterne ever contrived."

Every body, I presume, will admit that my Father was a *good man* ; and no body, I hope, will be so uncivil as to dispute with Mr John Bell and his clients, (I am sure, at least, I shall not, such is my esteem and respect for them), that I am a *very bad man*, far worse than Catiline, or Nero, or Cesar Borgia, or Robespierre, or any the greatest monsters that either ancient or modern times have produced ; if they are pleased to say so, or if they think it will help their cause. But that my Father was an *old man*, and that I am a *young man*, is absolutely impossible ; for this plain reason, that my Father died just at the same age which I have now attained, namely, eight and forty. The lectures which Mr John Bell professes to admire so much, were composed and actually read in the University of Edinburgh between six and seven years before his death ; and had even been printed and published, so that they could no longer be read in College, two or three years before his death. On Mr John Bell's own principle, therefore, they must have been the words of a *good young man*.

It is not in the least wonderful that a man should fall into such mistakes when he writes about things of which he is totally ignorant ; but the wonder is, that in this age of biography and anecdote, which seem to me to amount to an epidemic disease both among writers and readers, Mr John Bell should be ignorant of what is so generally known, and has so often appeared in print. If he had taken the trouble to enquire, he might also have learned, that my Father was as arrant a Brobdignagian as I am ; and that

he.

he wielded an immense club with his gigantic arm ; in plain English, that he was a man six feet high, of a very robust make, and that he walked with a plain oaken stick in his hand ; that he was equally plain in every part of his dress and manner ; and that he, more than any other individual, contributed, both by his precept and example, to put an end to the ridiculous and disgraceful peculiarities of dress and manner by which Physicians had long been distinguished. Such peculiarities he treated with ridicule rather than with grave censure ; so he did all violent medical controversies and warfare, of which he had no better opinion than I have. Perhaps Mr John Bell and his clients, when they become a little better acquainted with my Father's writings, (which I earnestly recommend to their perusal, *nocturna versate manu, versate diurna*), will profit by his observations on that and on many other subjects ; for example, by one which they will find in the most popular and best of all his works. There, after strongly recommending the duties of humanity and charity, he adds ; “ But in this, as “ well as in the practice of every other duty, carefully avoid ostentation. Vanity is always defeating her own purposes. Fame “ is one of the natural rewards of virtue. Do not seek her, and “ she will follow you.”

This naturally reminds me of a very curious and modest request of Mr John Bell, expressed in the note at the bottom of the 5th page of his 2d section, to make out the etymology of *Canting*. I am sorry to say, that this point is not to be easily settled ; for it has long been disputed, and it is likely to be disputed much longer, whether it be derived from the proper name of our worthy countryman Mr *Andrew Cant*, of whining memory ; or whether it may boast a more noble descent from the Latin verb *canto*, to sing. Luckily, however, it is not necessary, even for the purpose of *canting* in the highest perfection, to settle those disputes, nor yet to know the meaning or to have the use of the word. There must have

have been *canting*, before there could be any word to express it; just as there must have been every other kind and figure of Rhetoric, before names could be given to them:

“ *For all a Rhetorician’s rules*

“ *But teach a man to name his Tools,*”

as Mr John Bell, who seems to have dipped into Hudibras, can scarce fail to know. *Cant*, I believe, most strictly and properly means “ *a whining pretension to goodness.*” Of this I have never seen a finer sample than Deacon Kennedy’s Memorial about the Surgeons Hospital in 1737; but very little, if at all, inferior to it, in that kind of eloquence, is Mr John Bell’s Answer to my Memorial in 1800. If, as his request seems to imply, he really does not know what *canting* is, he may now share the agreeable surprize of Moliere’s Bourgeois Gentilhomme, when he learned from his rhetoric-master, that he had been speaking *prose* all his life without knowing it.

The next very splendid example of Mr John Bell’s eloquence, and of his superior talents as an Advocate, is his noble Philippic on my ignorance of Surgery. For the better understanding and relishing this admirable effort of his genius, it is proper to state briefly what I had done in my former Memorial, in order to prevent any private or interested uses, or malevolent applications, that might be made of my general observations on the badness of the long established system of Chirurgical attendance in this Hospital. Conscious that I meant nothing malevolent to the Surgeons collectively, or to any one of them individually; conscious that I had no wish to favour any of them in preference to their brethren, and that my intentions were in every respect pure and honourable; but at the same time fully aware how easily my general remarks might be made a pretence for stating and enquiring into particular

lar instances of those evils which I represented as necessarily resulting from the system which I reprobated; and sensible that all such particular enquiries were unnecessary as well as odious; I took every precaution that I could think of to prevent them from being attempted, not only carefully avoiding them myself, but deprecating them in others, and protesting against them in the strongest terms, and endeavouring to shew, that the great point at issue ought to be determined purely on general principles, just as had been done fifty years before with respect to the mode of attendance of the Physicians. Conceiving too, that any suspicion, however groundless, that I wished either to favour or to injure any individuals of the Royal College of Surgeons, would in the first place have tended to frustrate my real benevolent purpose, and in the next place would have tended to make myself infamous, I endeavoured to preclude even the possibility of such suspicions, by declaring solemnly, that I was to take no share in the election of Surgeons to attend permanently in the Infirmary; and even stating explicitly, that I had no pretensions to be a judge of the real and comparative merits of the Surgeons of Edinburgh, especially of the junior members of their College, from among whom I thought it probable the election would be made. I stated, (Mem. page 116.) that I had not been bred a Surgeon; that though I had been obliged, like other Physicians, to learn the general principles of Surgery, I never liked to see the practice of it; that I never am present at an operation in private practice, unless at the patient's particular desire; that of course I see such operations very seldom; that though intimately connected with the Infirmary as Clinical Professor for more than three and twenty years, I had not in all that time gone to see any operation performed in it, except one day that I went to see Baron Wenzel operate on the eye; that there is not one of the junior Surgeons whom

whom I ever saw perform any greater operation than a common blood-letting; and that of course I know no more of their real and comparative merits, than I do of the qualifications of the Surgeons of Paris or Vienna.

Few men, I believe, perhaps not one in the world but Mr John Bell himself, could have made, or even have thought of making, such a noble use as he has done of those candid declarations of mine. His own peculiar and original genius, and his usual bad luck with respect to all matters of fact, appear in every sentence of his Philippic on this subject. (Answer, Sect. 3.).

“ We are surprised at the warmth with which the Memorialist expresses his tender feelings, where he could not feel. *He never entered a Surgical ward, nor saw an operation.* If he had even for once seen the sufferings of a fellow-creature protracted, or life itself endangered by ignorance, we could have pardoned all the extravagance of his reflections, even while we felt their untruth;” (page 2d.) “ He must write boldly who takes no care about the truth of his allegations;” (N. B. These are Mr John Bell’s own words; not mine, as most readers would probably think), “ and your Memorialist thinks good to take his facts on credit, as he does his feelings. *He knows no Surgeons*; he has seen no operations; he never entered the wards where those daily cruelties are perpetrated;” page 5. “ *He never entered into your Theatre* on that day which is a Sabbath of peace and ease to all the world, except your unhappy subjects,” &c. *Ibid.*

Fortune is really very unkind to Mr John Bell in these facts, of which he makes so excellent a use. With equal truth, and equal good sense, he might have asserted, that I never entered an Hospital, or saw a patient, or felt a pulse, or opened a book. Never having thought of keeping an account of the number of times that I have been in the Surgeons wards of the Royal Infirmary, I cannot say exactly, but I should guess, that in the last

three and thirty years of my life, I have been many more than an hundred times in those wards, just to see and enquire about patients whom I had sent into them, or who had been particularly recommended to me. And I presume I have been in them at least as often in the course of three years that I attended the Hospital as a student. For though the practice of Physic was my chief object, I had curiosity at least, if not sense enough, to wish to see a little of the practice of Surgery. Not having kept an account of the number of operations that I saw performed in the Theatre of the Royal Infirmary, I cannot say exactly how many I saw performed there in the course of the same three years; but as I attended the Theatre of the Infirmary as regularly as most students during that time, and often saw *two*, sometimes perhaps *three* operations in one hour, and this very commonly on Sunday, I should guess that I must have seen at least fifty, perhaps an hundred operations performed in that Theatre.

Mr John Bell goes on in the same strain, (Sect. 3. page 45.)
 “ The Memorialist tells us, he saw once the bloodless operation of
 “ Baron Wenzel! There, we are sure, he saw a laced ruffle and a
 “ sapphire ring :—but he never had the good fortune to see the
 “ bold operations of a John Hunter, a Pott, a Dease, (the great
 “ lithotomist), or of Mr Wood, the protector and encourager of
 “ his younger brethren.”

Still the same cruel bad luck with respect to matters of fact attends him in most of these particulars. He may, for aught I know, be right as to Baron Wenzel's lace ruffles and sapphire ring. I remember nothing about them: but, if my memory does not very strangely deceive me, I remember that he wore spectacles, that he seemed much embarrassed while operating, partly I believe from the peculiarity of the light, and that he was unsuccessful in his operations, of which there were two or three; and I remember well being told by Dr Rutherford, that he saw
 Baron

Baron Wenzel operate in private, very soon after, with perfect steadiness and complete success.

Why Mr John Bell has introduced the name of John Hunter among those of the London Surgeons whom I never had the good fortune to see operate, it is difficult to conceive. He would have been perfectly right with respect to *all* of them, if he had only had the good fortune to keep clear of John Hunter; for he was the *only* one of the London Surgeons that ever I saw operate. I was intimately acquainted with him, and had a very high opinion of his talents and truly original genius, and a still higher opinion of the genius of his wife. He was the *only* operating Surgeon in London with whom I was acquainted. I was not his pupil, which, after I became acquainted with him, I regretted very much. I never heard even one of his lectures on Anatomy or Surgery. My acquaintance with him began at a most unmedical, unhallowed place, called the British Coffee-house. But I met with him often at St George's Hospital, to which he was Surgeon, and of which I was a perpetual pupil; and there, two or three times, but to the best of my remembrance not oftener, I saw him operate.

It is still more marvellous, that Mr John Bell should have specified Mr Wood (meaning evidently Mr Alexander Wood) as one of the Surgeons whom I never had the good fortune to see operate. If he had taken the trouble to *think*, he might have known that Mr Wood was almost at the head of his profession, and was esteemed one of the best, if not the very best operator in Edinburgh, and that he was one of the *four substitute* Surgeons (as they were called) whom the Managers *selected* from the whole corporation of Surgeons, to do the principal part of the duty in this Hospital, when I was a student, that is, some thirty years ago. And if he had taken the trouble to *enquire*, he must have been informed, that in my younger days I was intimately acquainted, and lived on the most friendly terms with Mr Wood; and that I was even

a kind of pupil of his ; at least that I attended his shop for many months, in order to become acquainted with the common practice of Pharmacy. As to Mr John Bell's most valuable fact, that I never saw Mr Wood operate, I have only to say, that he was the first Surgeon I ever saw operate in private. I remember well, that it was on a poor woman who laboured under a strangulated hernia ; and that Dr Monro was present at the operation, and much surprised at meeting me there ; for till that hour he did not know that I meant to follow Physic as a profession. This I mention particularly, because it reminds me strongly, that almost from the time I began to study Physic, I made a practice of going to see operations when I had an opportunity ; to say the truth, not as a matter of amusement, or a thing that I liked, but as a proper piece of medical education.

I think it very *probable* too, but having no distinct remembrance of the fact, I cannot assert it positively, that Mr Wood was the first Surgeon that ever I saw operate in public in this Hospital. I am sure at least, that I have seen him operate in it very often, perhaps twenty or thirty times ; but I kept no account of such things, not dreaming of the possibility of its ever being wanted.

I scarce know what to think of Mr John Bell's curious expression relating to the same gentleman, (Sect. 3. page 45. line 19.) " The "*coarse* but skilful hands of a Sandie Wood." That his hands were skilful, I admit ; but that they were *coarse*, I never could perceive, nor ever heard, or read, till I had the pleasure of perusing Mr John Bell's inestimable pamphlet. Mr Wood always appeared to me, and I know was thought by others, not only a judicious and steady, but a very *neat* operator. I am sure he was much neater than several others, and to the best of my remembrance, was the neatest of all the Surgeons, who, from twenty-nine to thirty-

thirty-three years ago, were accustomed to operate in the Theatre of this Infirmary.

It is still more difficult to conceive what Mr John Bell means by another curious compliment to the same Mr Wood, whom, in the same page, (line 25. and 26.), he calls "the protector and encourager of his younger brethren." Even with the help of his own very ample commentary on his text, (page 51.), there remain many things in it somewhat hard to be understood. While he mentions Mr Wood as the father of their College, as the oldest of their profession in this city, and as the generous protector of every young Surgeon, he is pleased to tell us, that they (the younger Surgeons) *consider him as the head of their party.*

That the oldest Surgeon in Edinburgh should be the head of the party of the younger Surgeons, seems at first sight almost as incongruous and strange, as that the youngest should be the head of the oldest. That a Manager of the Infirmary, as Mr Wood is and long has been, should be the head of a party of the younger Surgeons, when these are engaged in a violent opposition to an unanimous resolution of the Managers with respect to the choice and mode of attendance of the Surgeons of the Infirmary, is still more marvellous; and to many people will appear incredible; especially to those who know, as Mr John Bell might have done, if he had taken the trouble to enquire, or even to look into the minutes of the corporation of Surgeons, that the sentiments of Mr Wood in favour of selection from among the Surgeons, and against their indiscriminate attendance in the Hospital by rotation, were long since publicly avowed and testified both by word and deed, and to this day stand on record. Full five and thirty years ago he accepted the appointment (by the Managers) of one of the four *substitute* Surgeons to the Infirmary. This he certainly would not have done, if he had not known that it was right, or if he had wished to preserve that pretended equality among the Surgeons of Edinburgh,

for

for which Deacon Kennedy and Co. had fought so manfully near thirty years before. But the spirit of Deacon Kennedy rested on Mr Wood's brethren in 1766; who, taking grievous umbrage at such a violation of their equal rights and merits, soon engaged in a violent contest about it with the Managers, which lasted several years, and at last worried them out of it. I have been informed by men whose authority I cannot distrust, but not having access to their minutes, I cannot assert from my own knowledge, that during that long and keen contest, Mr Alexander Wood was the principal champion who fought the battle for the Managers in the corporation of Surgeons, and that, being outvoted by his brethren, he formally protested against their proceedings, and that his protests still remain on record.

I have heard that Mr Wood, as being a Manager of the Infirmary, from considerations of delicacy, *declined voting* as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, in *any of the questions* relating to the present contest between these two corporations. Perhaps he would have acted on the same principle, and with equal delicacy, by declining to vote on the same contest at any meeting of the Managers, if he had had an opportunity. But, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no such opportunity occurred. I heard of no vote or dissention among the Managers on the subject. They seemed to me to act unanimously and cordially in the business.

That kind of delicacy which induced Mr Wood to decline voting on this contest in the College of Surgeons, by some will be thought right, and by others wrong. As it does not concern either me or my argument, I shall offer no opinion about it, and make no remark on it but one, which will scarce admit of dispute; that, be it right or wrong, it is no proof, and affords no presumption or probability, that Mr Wood had changed his opinion, so long, so publicly, so strenuously maintained, and actually manifested by his conduct. If Mr John Bell thinks otherwise,
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and seriously wishes to prove that Mr Wood has changed his original opinion, and been the head of the party of the junior Surgeons in this their most brilliant contest with the Managers, it will be worth his while to give some proof of so marvellous a *fact*. If he can establish his *fact*, he surely will not let slip so fine an opportunity of having a clean fair cut at me, by asserting, that the change in Mr Wood's sentiments was all my doing, all the effect of my detestable Memorial; and that it illustrates completely, and proves, as far as one instance can prove so general a proposition, what he has done me the honour to say of me, (Answer, page 8.), "That my talents are of a peculiar kind;—useless to my profession, dangerous to science, terrible to all but my enemies, and invariably fatal to every good cause which I have the cruelty to espouse."

I beg it may be observed, however, that though I cannot help feeling, and even expressing some distrust, as well as surprise, at Mr John Bell's declaration, that Mr Wood is the head of their party among the Surgeons on this occasion, yet I by no means presume to contradict it; which in truth I have no authority, or right, or interest to do. I leave it to those whom it concerns to adjust it at their leisure, or to let it alone, just as they think best. In the mean time, I trust that Mr John Bell, with his usual kindness to me, will allow me to suspend my belief with respect to so strange a fact, as Mr Alexander Wood being the head of the party of the junior Surgeons at present, till either he himself acknowledges it, or some evidence is produced of it, or at least till I hear of it from some other quarter, which I have never yet done. Considering how lamentably and how uniformly unfortunate Mr John Bell has been in all his facts, just as positively asserted; with respect to me, it seems neither an irrational, nor improbable, nor uncandid conjecture, that he may have been almost as unfortunate with respect to that fact which relates to Mr Wood.

I am much more interested, and indeed strongly called upon, to acknowledge my great obligations to Mr John Bell, for the extraordinary lenity and kindness to me manifested in the 4th page of his 3d section, where he has taken occasion to suggest a few gentle hints about my extraordinary ignorance. " Conscious of
 " the atrocity of his representations, he acknowledges, and re-
 " peatedly avows his ignorance ! A superfluous document, God
 " knows ! and to us a slender consolation. His ignorance ! after
 " what he has published against us, what could his confessions of
 " ignorance avail ? We know his ignorance ; we could have
 " *proved*, had he ventured to deny it, a degree of ignorance,
 " which, in the character he has thought fit to assume, is criminal."

He is perfectly right in sparing himself the trouble of proving my *ignorance* ; that is, as appears by the context, my ignorance of *Surgery*. He judged rightly, that any such proof would be unnecessary, his bare assertion being at least of equal force with any proof that he could bring ; just as an honest man's word is as good as his bond. I have no doubt that all his clients, all his friends, all who know him, nay, all who, without knowing him personally, have seen in his writings but ten or a dozen samples of his knowledge, and accuracy, and judgment, and caution, and candour, would trust as much to his assertion, as to his most elaborate proofs of my ignorance of every thing, just as they would take his word as readily as his bond for L. 1000.

This plainly being the case, I can scarce find words to express my gratitude to him, for that remnant of former kindness towards me, which hath made him confine his remarks on my ignorance, to my criminal ignorance of *Surgery*. I humbly hope he will have the goodness to continue the same moderation and delicacy, and not insist on asserting (that is *proving*) my still more criminal ignorance of *Physic*. The difference to him would be next to nothing ;

thing ; but to me it would be a very serious matter. It is possible, that notwithstanding all his assertions (proofs) of my criminal ignorance of Surgery, I may yet continue to pick up a few miserable guineas by the practice of Physic, so as to keep soul and body together a few years longer. But if he should take it into his head to assert (prove) my more criminal ignorance of Physic, which I am sure he could do as easily as he has asserted (proved) that I never saw Mr Wood operate, never saw an operation, know no Surgeons, never entered the Surgeons wards in this Hospital, &c. &c. I suspect that I should soon be forced to betake myself to a more spare regimen than would suit my constitution, or than I have ever yet ventured to prescribe for any of my patients. I have some notion even that the too great facility of proving my ignorance of Physic, and the greater difficulty, if any thing could be difficult to his superior genius, of *proving* my ignorance of Surgery, may have induced him to prefer the latter to the former topic. He has however taken care to shew what he could do, and even to state the general principle on which all such decisive assertions (proofs) of my ignorance of Physic might be established. “ The Memorialist is so ignorant in our profession, that he applies “ to it the rules and canons of his own ; he believes that Surgery, “ like Medicine, is an uncertain and speculative science,” &c. (Sect. 2d, page 48.). By this simple and comprehensive canon, which he has so easily and happily proved, it follows plainly, that whenever I pronounced that a patient was far gone in a consumption, Mr John Bell has only to assert, and he would *ipso facto* prove, that the disease was a dropsy ; if I called it a dropsy, he could prove that it was a violent fever ; if I called it a violent fever, he could prove that it was only a very bad old pox ; if I called it an old pox, he could prove that it was an apoplexy ; if I prescribed large bleeding and water-gruel, he could prove that the patient’s only chance for life, was eating a pound of beef steaks to his dinner,

ner, and drinking a bottle of port after it; if I advised a patient to ride on horseback and bathe in the sea, Mr John Bell could prove that he ought to have been confined to his bed, with a large blister on his head, and mustard cataplasms at his feet. Not one of these *proofs* should I ever think of disputing; and not Mr John Bell only, but any body that pleased, might give ten thousand such proofs, as easily as he could say Jack Robinson.

But to *give* such proofs of my ignorance of Surgery is quite another matter: it is more *dignus vindice nodus*, and on this very account the more worthy of Mr John Bell's peculiar genius. To men of ordinary talents, it would appear almost as difficult as to *prove* my ignorance of the sciences of magic and judicial astrology, or of the practical arts of playing on the fiddle or dancing on the tight rope; and pretty nearly for the same reasons, namely, that I neither profess those sciences, nor ever attempted to practise those arts.

Mr John Bell, I know, can easily specify one memorable instance of a kind of dispute in which I once happened to be engaged about a point in Surgery. But to the best of my remembrance and belief, that instance has been the only one of the kind in which I have been concerned, directly or indirectly, in the course of full six and twenty years that I have practised as a Physician in this city. And I am sure that Mr John Bell, unrivalled as his talents are for proving whatever he pleases, will find some difficulty in proving, that *that* one was an instance of my criminal ignorance of Surgery. For, first, the opinion which I declared in that case, was formed on the plainest evidence of *two* of my own senses; secondly, it was confirmed by the concurrent opinion of *two* experienced Surgeons, Mr Benjamin Bell and Mr Arrot; thirdly and lastly, but not least on this important occasion, my opinion was confirmed, a few weeks after, by the individual Mr John Bell himself; who, by the most admirable manœuvre that ever I heard of, was called
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in by those who differed from us, I firmly believe for no other reason, but the full confidence they had, that he would joyfully embrace such an opportunity of deciding, right or wrong, against his dear friend and namesake, and professional brother, Mr Benjamin Bell. But Mr John Bell was too sharp for them.

That the same person may practise both Physic and Surgery with great credit to himself and benefit to others, I shall never dispute. But to do this, he must have been regularly bred to both branches of the profession, and must understand them both thoroughly. This is undeniably the case with many practitioners in this island, whether called Surgeons or Physicians. It is one of the effects, and I think a very good effect, of the very flourishing state of the Edinburgh Medical School for more than half a century past, of the cheapness of medical education here, and of the Professors of Physic for the greater part of that time having all taught in English. These circumstances combined, have long put it in the power of those who mean to practise first and chiefly as Surgeons, to acquire competent knowledge of Physic. Accordingly, we find, not only among the most eminent practitioners called Surgeons in this city, but among army and navy Surgeons, and often among Surgeons settled in very small country towns, many men perfectly qualified to practise Physic as well as Surgery. In many situations, as in the army, the navy, and in small country towns, it is absolutely requisite that the same person should practise both branches of the medical profession, or all three, including Pharmacy; just as in such country towns, the same shopkeeper must be woollen and linen draper, tobacco-nist, cheesemonger, hardware-man, and grocer. But in great towns, this is not necessary; and it has been thought, that some considerable advantages might result from the several branches of Medicine being practised separately, by different persons; just as in a great manufactory, one man is employed solely in making the
head,

head, and another in making the point of a pin. The same man, no doubt, might make both the head and the point; but probably he would not make them either so fast or so well.

Conceiving that one branch of the medical profession was enough for me, and that probably I might understand it the better for giving my attention to it alone, I have uniformly through life endeavoured to keep as strictly as possible within the limits of my own province; and I never yet heard that any Surgeon or Apothecary complained of my interfering in his province. It would be absurd to say that I *never* gave an opinion or advice in a case that properly belonged to the province of Surgery; for the merely telling a patient that his case required the aid of a Surgeon, and that as a Physician I could do him no essential service, which I have done some thousands of times, implies the having formed an opinion of such a case. But I can say with perfect confidence, that I never attempted to practise Surgery; that I never yet gave an opinion in any chirurgical case in which I had not the evidence of at least one of my own senses to determine my judgment; that in all doubtful cases, (either wholly or partly chirurgical), and in many that I did not think doubtful, but wished the patients to have the best professional opinions and assistance that could be got, I have insisted on their having the opinion of a professed Surgeon; in some cases, even a consultation of more than one; that in all such cases, I should trust much more to the opinion of Surgeons than to my own, if we chanced to differ in opinion. But of such difference of opinion, (between myself and professed Surgeons in a chirurgical case), I have never known but that one instance already mentioned, in which, to my unspeakable comfort and very great amusement, Mr John Bell had the goodness to decide in my favour. I heartily wish I could be as sure, or nearly so, of being as uniformly right in the opinions I have given, or may hereafter give, in cases purely medical; in which, very generally,

nerally, the same direct evidence of our senses cannot be obtained, and too often is but ill compensated by all the aids which reasoning and medical science can afford.

As Mr John Bell is so much better acquainted with my criminal ignorance of Surgery than I am myself, and must be sensible how gratifying it would be to his clients, his friends, his professional brethren, and mine too, and my pupils, and to the public at large, to see his proofs of that ignorance, I hope he will perceive that it would be a downright sin to withhold them. It will not be necessary to publish them all, as they would probably be too voluminous; but one handsome volume in quarto, price four guineas in boards, containing a small sample of them, will be a valuable piece of literary property, for which my good friend and bookfeller Mr Creech will be ready to treat with him on the most liberal terms; it being evident, considering both the author and the subject of it, that the book must sell at least as well as Dr Blair's Sermons or Dr Buchan's Family Physician.

Any person who has read my former Memorial, or who will now take the trouble to look into it, must perceive, that Mr John Bell has taken the hint, of which he has so well availed himself in his Philippic on my criminal ignorance of Surgery, and in his assertions (proofs) that I never saw an operation, &c. from what I have mentioned in it, page 116, line 8. and 9. (that " though I " was obliged, as a student, to learn the general principles of " Surgery, as other Physicians do, I *never liked* to see the practice " of it)." By a slight but very happy change in my text, perfectly allowable to Mr John Bell in his capacity of advocate and avenger of his much injured junior Brethren, he has contrived to read or understand that I *never saw* an operation. There is the more merit in this noble emendation of that passage of my Memorial, that in the very next sentence I mention, that I never am present at an operation in private practice, unless at the patient's

tient's particular desire, and that of course I *see such operations very seldom*.

Most men would think, that this irresistibly implied that I saw such operations *sometimes*; which is the fact, as several of Mr John Bell's *senior* brethren, if he had taken the trouble to ask them, could have testified from their own certain knowledge. But this is not even left to be gathered by implication; for in different places of my Memorial, I have incidentally mentioned in positive terms, my having occasionally been present at chirurgical operations; for example, in page 185, where I mention, that, " I have seen some Surgeons operate very well, whose sight was so much impaired, that they were obliged to use spectacles." (To the best of my remembrance, John Hunter was one of these); in page 21, where I mention, that " I have repeatedly seen a Surgeon operate in the Infirmary, whose hand shook so much, that every student who saw him, thought he should scarce have undertaken to apply a plaster or a bandage. Yet, with that grievous defect, I have seen him attempt a nice operation on the eye:" and in the preceding page, (20.), where I mention, that " So long ago as when I was a student, and as such accustomed to attend in the operation-room," (of this Infirmary), " it was not uncommon for students to bestow very freely their marks of approbation or disapprobation on different operators." I mentioned even being there, sitting among the offenders, though I was not one of them, when their behaviour in this respect was so bad, as to bring on them a very severe but well-merited rebuke from Mr Alexander Wood. Perhaps Mr John Bell meant to contradict, that is, with him, to *disprove*, all that I had said on that point; for surely my declaring candidly, that I did not like to see the practice of Surgery, could no more imply that I never saw an operation, &c. than my acknowledging that I never *liked* to learn the rules of Latin Syntax, or the Table of Multiplication, or the English Alphabet,

phabet, can imply or render credible that I never learned these things; or than my declaring, that I neither like the sight nor the smell of a putrid mangled human body, can imply or make it credible, that I have not seen many a dissection. But these I conceive it necessary for me as a Physician to see very often. Not so chyrurgical operations, as I never mean to practise Surgery, or to constitute myself a critic in it, or a judge of the real and comparative merits of different operators.

It is no less admirable, and much more interesting, to observe the use which Mr John Bell makes of my criminal ignorance of Surgery, and of my never having seen an operation, &c. which he has so happily established. It may be easily understood from the whole drift and tenor of his Answer to me; for I do not think it is explicitly stated in any one passage in particular, though it is strongly implied in some of those already quoted, and indeed in numberless others.

The whole of his Philippic against me, and much of his argument, or *proofs*, (as he is pleased facetiously to call them, Sect. 3. page 47. line 14.), in behalf of his own clients, rest on the *tacitly assumed* principle, that every thing which I have stated so strongly, of the evils resulting from the indiscriminate attendance and multitudinous consultations of all the Surgeons of Edinburgh in the Infirmary, depends on my own personal observation, and my own private unassisted judgment.

That this, though perhaps not directly asserted, is implied in his admirable pleading, is manifest from this plain consideration, that if all that I have said of those evils were established by other evidence, my criminal ignorance of Surgery, and my never having seen an operation, would be of no more consequence in the discussion, than my total ignorance of the language of New Zealand, and my never having seen any of the operations or practices of the Cannibals who inhabit that happy country.

How repugnant that irresistible implication is to the whole tenor of my Memorial, every person who has read it must perceive at once. The fact is, that I went completely to the opposite extreme, and carefully and uniformly avoided stating any one consideration, or urging any argument, that depended on my own judgment, or my own means of observing.

If Surgery had been my favourite or only study for thirty years, and if during all that time I had regularly attended the Surgeons wards and operation-room of this Infirmary, and had paid the strictest attention to all the operations and other practice that I saw in them, I should have thought myself, and certainly should have been thought by others, a most arrogant, uncandid, and irrational critic and pretended reformer; if on the faith of my own observations, and on the force of my own reasonings, I had asserted facts, which others, who had good opportunities of observing, did not acknowledge, and complained of evils, which the most competent judges did not perceive. What censure then could have been too severe for me, if without any pretensions to critical knowledge of Surgery, or any minute observation of particular facts, I had acted in the same arrogant, uncandid, irrational manner?

The whole tenor of my former Memorial must shew how carefully I have avoided that disgraceful error; but one short paragraph expresses my sense of it so strongly, that I shall quote it here.

“ If my opinion on this subject” (the indiscriminate attendance of the Surgeons by rotation) “ were new, or singular, though long formed, I should not presume at this time to obtrude it on the Managers. But for more than twenty years it has been my firm opinion, and during all that time I have frequently had occasion to hear the same opinion strongly expressed by many different persons, Students, Professors of Medicine, Physicians, Surgeons,

“ Surgeons, nay, even Managers of the Royal Infirmary ; persons well informed, and frequently eye-witnesses of the evils resulting from that system which they agreed with me in condemning,” Mem. page 19.

My argument rested not on my own observations and opinions, but on the common sense of mankind, as testified by their conduct in the choice that they make of Physicians and Surgeons, when themselves or their families have need of our professional services ; and if possible, still more strongly shewn by the corresponding conduct of Physicians and Surgeons in similar circumstances, who certainly would think it a most cruel hardship, if they were precluded from making a selection among their professional brethren, and were obliged to accept, even gratuitously, their assistance on any possible plan of indiscriminate rotation, and still worse, if they were obliged to trust themselves and their families to a numerous and promiscuous consultation of Physicians or Surgeons, when perhaps exasperated to the utmost at one another, by the most malignant and inveterate personal, professional, and corporation disputes. My argument rested on the uniform conduct of the Managers of all other Hospitals, in selecting from the great number of Physicians and Surgeons in large towns, a few of each profession whom they think best qualified to do the hospital-duty : it rested in some measure on the original conduct of the first Managers of this Infirmary, and even on the words of their charter ; on their conduct with respect to the Physicians, and that of the Physicians towards them ; on the self-evident truth, that Surgeons as well as Physicians acquire much improvement by extensive practice and long experience in their profession ; and on the necessary consequence of this truth, that it must be very unfavourable to the patients in this Hospital, to be committed to the care of young and inexperienced Surgeons : it rested very much on what I knew (by their own declarations both in public and in private) of the sentiments and remarks

of many of the most eminent Surgeons that have ever practised in this Infirmary, several of whom had withdrawn from that duty avowedly on account of the badness of the system of indiscriminate attendance by rotation, which I reprobated; and some of whom had even declared, that they would in their own College have moved for putting an end to it, had they not been afraid of incurring the suspicion of having some private interest of their own in view, such as expecting to be made Surgeons to the Infirmary themselves, to the exclusion of many of their professional brethren. Nay, my argument rested very much on the admissions, the assertions, and the reasonings of the Surgeons themselves, on the faith of which, the bargain with the Managers was made. Those assertions and arguments I took as stated by Deacon Kennedy and his friends in the Memorial about the Surgeons Hospital in 1737; but I took the liberty to consider them relatively to the patients as well as to the Surgeons; and pointed out strongly, that relatively to the Surgeons and their supposed improvement by their indiscriminate attendance in rotation, they are inconclusive, and even feeble; and that, on the supposition of the number of Surgeons attending in that manner being considerable, the improvement of each of them individually must be next to nothing; but that relatively to the sick poor in the Hospital, the same facts and arguments are conclusive proof of a great and cruel wrong.

All these things I humbly conceive I might have *seen* clearly, and understood perfectly, and pointed out plainly to the conviction of the Managers, though I had never seen an operation, nay, though I had been stone blind from my birth, unless I had also been deaf; or an idiot; and though I had been so ignorant of Surgery, as not to know a trepan from an amputation knife, or a broken leg from a cancerous breast. It is much to be lamented, that Mr John Bell and his clients did not extend their remarks on ignorance of Surgery, and of all that passed in the Surgeons wards, and in the operation-room.

operation-room of this Infirmary; to the *minority* of their own professional brethren, I mean the fourteen out of twenty-nine, at a very memorable meeting of their College; which fourteen, comprehending many of the most eminent Surgeons that at present are, or ever were, in Edinburgh, and who have done the longest and best duty in this Infirmary, declared, in the most explicit terms, that the indiscriminate attendance of the Surgeons in rotation was *irreconcilable with the good of the Infirmary*.

A stronger testimonial in favour of my argument can scarce be wished, nay, hardly conceived; but there is one other, nearly the same in substance, which has the advantage of being *unanimous*, given at a very full meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons, given, as it were incidentally, in the course of a calm and deliberate consideration of another subject; given, not as an imperfect, reluctant, extorted testimony about a thing doubtful, or obscurely known, or capable of being disputed, but as a frank avowal of a thing notorious and acknowledged; given long before my Memorial was ever thought of, at a period nearly equally distant from the end of the last great contest and the beginning of the present contest with the Managers, about the mode of attendance of the Surgeons in the Infirmary, and seemingly not connected with, or vitiated or modified by, any of their own personal, professional, or corporation disputes.

Not having access to their records, I cannot presume to give the following account of what passed in their College about eighteen years ago; as an exact transcript from their own minute-book; but I have it from such authority, that I can have no doubt of its being in sum and substance perfectly true. If any of them suspect that there is any error in it, he may satisfy himself by consulting their minutes; by them I shall abide.

Surgeons

Surgeons Hall, Edinburgh, 9th August 1784.

Mr * * represented, That it was considered by many of the members as a very great hardship, that the Surgeons attending upon the Royal Infirmary should not have the power of admitting and dismissing the patients in the chirurgical department, but that it should be vested in the Physicians of the Hospital, who have no concern in the cure of these patients ; and he moved, that a petition be presented to the Managers for an alteration of a rule so injurious to the attendant Surgeons. Mr * proposed, that it should be referred to the consideration of a committee composed of Mess. * * * * and * :

The committee reported, That they had fully considered the proposal, and were clearly of opinion, that such an alteration would be highly proper and agreeable ; but at the same time, after perusing the Managers last minute on that subject, find their refusal expressed in the strongest and most pointed terms. The committee, therefore, humbly suggested, that previous to making such application, the Royal College should endeavour to collect the sentiments of the Managers, and by that means be able to discover what probability there is of their petition being attended to.

They are likewise of opinion, that it would be imprudent to run the risk of irritating the Managers by repeated applications of this nature, and thereby afford them an apology for adopting measures WHICH, HOWEVER ADVANTAGEOUS THEY MIGHT BE TO THE HOSPITAL, WOULD BE ATTENDED WITH ESSENTIAL PREJUDICE TO THE INTEREST OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE. The above report being considered by the meeting, *was unanimously approved of.*

Such, I have good reason to believe, were the words of the report of a respectable committee, and such the unanimous opinion of a very full meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1784. I understand that six and twenty Fellows of the College were present

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at that meeting, and approved of that report. I have suppressed here the names of the gentlemen present, and even of those (five in number) who formed the committee; for the names of individuals are not essential to my argument; and it happens, somewhat unfortunately, that while *three* of the *five* who so honestly avowed that what was *advantageous to the Hospital*, was to be prevented because it would be *prejudicial to the interest of the Royal College*, have on the present occasion most honourably preferred the good of the Hospital (that is of the sick poor) to the interest, real or supposed, of their own College; the other *two* have done just the contrary. Whether the conduct of these two, (of the committee), and of some others of the College who concurred in unanimously approving of that report, and yet have keenly opposed the Managers on the present occasion, proceeds entirely from their love of consistency, or from pure zeal for the interest of their own Royal College, or from the perverse operation of my unlucky Memorial on some irritable constitutions, it is very difficult, or perhaps impossible to ascertain. But there is no difficulty whatever in ascertaining that their conduct does not proceed from pure zeal, or any zeal at all, for the welfare of the sick poor in the Hospital.

The unlooked-for acquisition of that most precious and characteristic document, of the sentiments of the Surgeons themselves, with respect to the opposition between the *advantage* of the Hospital, and the *interest* of their Royal College, enables me to explain, (I trust sufficiently), to what facts and circumstances I alluded in the following passage of my former Memorial, (page 259, 260.)

“ It is possible, however, that some particular facts or circumstances, unknown to me, or heard of only as vague reports, to which I could pay no regard, may be well known to the Surgeons, and may by them be thought of such importance in behalf of the present system, that I ought to have stated them, and given them their full weight in this paper. I am sensible

“ that

“ that any wilful suppression of such facts or circumstances on
 “ my part, would be just as bad as the fabrication of falsehoods
 “ to serve my purpose.

“ Therefore, to preclude at once all such surmises, I hereby
 “ publicly make them this offer, which they must all acknow-
 “ ledge to be fair.

“ If any *facts* or *circumstances* known to them have been omit-
 “ ted in this Memorial, which they think should have been *stated*
 “ in it, as involving the honour and interest, either of their Col-
 “ lege in general or of any individual member of it, and which,
 “ on mature deliberation, they wish to have as publicly known
 “ as this paper will be, let them give me *authentic information* of
 “ those things, and I engage, without delay, to print them in
 “ their own words, in an Additional Memorial, which shall be
 “ distributed in the same manner as this; and either to admit
 “ them to be valid, or to give my reasons for disregarding
 “ them.

“ They will not, I presume, understand by this offer, that I un-
 “ dertake or wish to argue their case for them. I have the humi-
 “ lity to believe, that they would rather trust it to a consultation of
 “ the five and twenty youngest Lawyers at the bar, or to all of
 “ them in rotation; rather to Jonathan Dawplucker himself; per-
 “ haps rather to the Devil, than to me. But I wish them fully to
 “ know, that there is no wilful suppression, on my part, of any
 “ fact or circumstance favourable to them, and unfavourable to
 “ my cause; and that I should consider any such disingenuous
 “ conduct, as both disgraceful to myself, and inconsistent with the
 “ honest and benevolent purpose of this Memorial.”

At first sight, one should think it no easy matter either to misun-
 derstand that very candid and liberal offer which I made, or to
 mistake the reason and purpose of it, or to take offence at it. But
 Mr John Bell has had the good fortune to do all these things,
 seemingly

seemingly with the utmost ease and even pleasure: such is the force of superior genius.

By the simple expedient of suppressing the first two paragraphs, and also the last paragraph, of that passage, and also mutilating *a little* the third paragraph, which he gives in the following words, " But if there be any facts or circumstances, which, on mature deliberation, they wish to have as publicly known as this paper will be, *let them give me authentic information,*" he has contrived to make it a subject of great wrath, and most severe reprehension. I scarce think he could have expressed his indignation in more violent terms, if I had insisted on administering a large dose of ratf-bane to him, and to each of his professional Brethren. His words are these :

" We know not how this gentleman came to think of addressing language of this kind to men as capable as himself of representing to the Public the principles of their profession, as capable of judging impartially and honestly for the interests of a public Charity! Nor can we imagine where, among the diplomatic records, in Imperial Ukase, or in Turkish Firman, the author found precedent for this august style! but well we know, that nothing has been promulgated by Paul Emperor of all the Russias, in his present perturbed state of mind, more supreme than this declaration," &c. *See I. page 49.*

All this furious reprimand and abuse, only for offering to print and publish any thing which the Surgeons themselves might think I ought to have published in my original Memorial, as favourable to their cause; and the *not* publishing of which might have been regarded as wilful and disingenuous suppression of the truth. My offer went no farther; and was only a reasonable and fair precaution on my part to prevent an unjust and foul suspicion, to which otherwise I should have been exposed. For, admitting that the Surgeons were as capable as myself, or infinitely

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more

more capable, of representing to the Public whatever they pleased; admitting even that they were as capable of judging *impartially and honestly for the interests of a public Charity*, which it now appears *indisputably* that so lately as 1784 they were *unanimously resolved not to do*; and supposing further, that they had actually published, in an answer to my Memorial, all those facts and circumstances to which I alluded; still any such publication of theirs, far from being a vindication of me, would have been a strong article of evidence against me. Supposing what I had heard to be true, I was bound in candour and fair dealing to state it publicly in my Memorial: but supposing it false, I should certainly have incurred the reproach of wilfully fabricating such a falsehood; for I had heard it only as a vague report, and was not even at liberty, having given my promise to that effect, to mention the persons from whom I heard it, and who themselves could not vouch for the truth of it. Then, the circumstances, to which I alluded, were, like those in Deacon Kennedy's Memorial, of so ambiguous a nature, that in one point of view they were strongly in favour of the claim of the Surgeons; but in another point of view they were, in my opinion, decisively against them: But I could not avail myself of them for my purpose, till they were either authenticated to me by some individual from his own certain knowledge, or were openly avowed by the Surgeons themselves collectively.

The passage quoted (page 143,-4.) from my former Memorial, of which it is the end, was intended not only to prevent unfavourable suspicions of my wilfully suppressing those circumstances, but to procure some authentic information, or if possible an avowal of them by the Surgeons collectively, if on mature deliberation they should choose to dispute the point with the Managers. An attentive reader will perceive at once that the whole of that passage, comprehending four paragraphs, as already quoted, is supplemental. It was written after my Memorial was (as I thought) finished,

ed, and even in print; in consequence of my being told that I might perhaps meet with more difficulty and opposition from some of the Surgeons than I was aware of, and this on principles somewhat different from those which I had stated. It was suggested to me, by two or three different persons, who knew of my Memorial, that some of the Surgeons considered their equal right of attending and operating in the Infirmary by rotation, not merely as an honourable privilege long since acquired, but as a matter of great interest, and in one respect even of *pecuniary* interest, to their College in its corporate capacity.

I was told, that the great advantages of that privilege, as a piece of *education* in Surgery which could be got *no where else*, had been sometimes strongly urged as an argument to induce some young men of the profession to become members of the Royal College of Surgeons; which implies, in many cases, paying a good round sum of money to the College. I am convinced there was no mistake in that information; for though I am not at liberty to mention his name, I can state, that soon after my former Memorial was distributed, I was informed by a gentleman of the profession, that *that* argument had been strongly urged to induce him to *enter* with the College of Surgeons; which however he has not done.

I was told that some individuals knowing of that privilege, and thinking it a good piece of education in their profession, had actually on that account paid their money to become Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, though they did not mean afterwards to reside or practise in this City or in its neighbourhood. It might be injurious as well as indelicate to individuals, who may afterwards change their mind and settle here, to mention names: but I presume the fact in general will not be disputed. How far that branch of the revenue of the Royal College of Surgeons may be increased, how much the prosperity of their Widows Fund, (a noble institution, which does their Society, and

particularly MR HAY, very great honour) may be promoted, by that application of their privilege of attending indiscriminately in the Infirmary, it is difficult or impossible to determine. But it is unnecessary to dwell on such points, which are more than tacitly given up, by Mr John Bell and his clients, in shifting the very dangerous and untenable ground that Deacon Kennedy and his friends had chosen, and declaring, to the astonishment as well as edification of the ignorant and malevolent vulgar, that young Surgeons were not, like young Physicians, capable of being improved by experience, and notoriously standing much in need of it, as Deacon Kennedy and Co. had ignorantly and wickedly asserted; but on the contrary, in full perfection from the moment that they become Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, and consequently incapable of growing better. But admitting, in compliment to Mr John Bell, and his Junior Brethren and Clients, that the youngest Surgeons who have become Fellows of their Royal College can never grow better, it is at least abundantly evident that they must all be very capable of growing worse, as they grow older; their eyes growing dim, their hands unsteady, themselves lazy, negligent, and forgetful of what they had learned when young; and probably some of them growing drunken, insolent, and brutal; for to these sad infirmities the individuals of our most noble Faculty, just like men of all other professions and of no profession, are unfortunately subject.

If therefore Mr John Bell's noble discovery be admitted, namely, that the youngest Surgeons are in full perfection, neither needing, nor capable of receiving, any improvement by experience, still it would follow, as a necessary consequence, that a selection ought to be made among all the Surgeons Fellows of the Royal College, just to give the charge of the patients in the Hospital to the youngest and most inexperienced of them; all of whom, on the principle assumed, must have attained the utmost possible

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or conceivable improvement, and none of whom (merely for want of time) can have fallen off from that high state of perfection.

I scarce think that either Mr John Bell or his clients will venture to maintain, but if they should try it, I am sure they will get no body to believe, that either by an express clause, or by some secret charm in the charter of their Royal College, the Fellows of it are exempted from the common infirmities of human nature ; and in particular, preserved from growing old, and stupid, and lazy, and half blind, and careless, brutal, and drunken.

To such little peculiarities and misfortunes as these I alluded in my former Memorial ; as I think, in the most delicate, and certainly in the most general terms ; but in such a manner as could not fail to be understood by all interested in the subject, and qualified to judge of it. These were my words : “ Common sense, “ and justice, and humanity, all require, that for so difficult and “ important a trust, some selection should be made ; and that some “ regard should be paid to the experience, and to the *personal* and “ *professional character*, as well as to the education and station of “ the persons in whom that trust is reposed.” *Mem.* p. 30.

I thought it unnecessary and indelicate to be more particular on such a subject. But now that Mr John Bell and his clients have made it necessary, and have obligingly removed all scruples in point of delicacy, I shall explain myself more fully.

Whatever may be the character and habits of the individual Members of the Royal College of Surgeons at present, of many of whom I have scarce any knowledge, and of none of whom I must be understood here to express any opinion, I am sure, that even within my memory, several Fellows of that Royal College were very honest fellows ; men duly attentive to moisten their clay. This is certainly one of the most important duties which a rational being owes to himself, and accordingly has been approved and practised by
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many of the most orthodox Divines of all Christian Churches, as well as by the greatest Heathen Philosophers : for Zeno, Plato, Aristotle, all were lovers of a bottle. It would therefore be little less than heresy, and certainly would be useless, as well as absurd, to object to it. But it must be owned, and it is much to be lamented, that the very frequent and zealous discharge of that sacred duty which a man owes to himself, sometimes interferes a little with the performance of those secondary duties that he owes to others ; for example, those little offices which every man of the medical profession owes to his patients. Accordingly, I have now and then seen some of those very honest Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons visiting their patients, when they had moistened their clay so effectually, that they could neither speak articulately, nor walk or stand without staggering, and when they must have been equally unfit to judge what ought to be done, or to perform any chirurgical operation that might have been needed.

The hour of the ordinary visit of the Surgeons in the Infirmary, broad noon, must in general have preserved their patients in it from suffering much in that way. But within my memory, some of the Surgeons *now dead*, who attended in it by rotation, were notorious fots and drunkards ; and as in cases of accidents, or sudden and urgent danger of patients previously in the Hospital, the attending Surgeon must come and officiate at any hour of the day, some unfortunate patients have had a little experience of such Surgeons. If, in the course of judicial proceedings, it had become necessary to establish by evidence some particular instances of that kind, I could have proved, by the most unexceptionable testimony of two eminent Surgeons, both of whom have had the honour to preside over the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, both of whom were eye-witnesses of the fact, and one of whom even was the assistant in the operation, that the attendant Surgeon operated in an urgent case when he was so drunk, that he did not know
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the back of his knife from the edge, and actually attempted to cut with the back of it.

Another of those very honest fellows gave me once, in private practice, a good specimen of his talents and character: and as such an instance explains better than any general remarks can do what I here wish to point out, I shall state briefly the fact.

Near twenty years ago, I was called at midnight to see a gentleman, who, I was told was very ill. I found him extremely ill indeed, with high fever, and strong marks of violent internal inflammation. From some very peculiar symptoms which I observed in him, I suspected that the inflammation was seated in his liver: but as this disease, at least in its violent form, is uncommon in this country, I could not help distrusting my own judgment, and was led of course to examine him very minutely, and to put many questions to him, by his answers to which, I soon discovered that he was in the secret, and one of us: for we find one another out as easily as free masons do. I then told him plainly what I suspected his disorder was, and what were my reasons for doubting about it. He immediately put an end to my doubts, by telling me, that he was convinced I was right; for that two years before, when at Canton in China, where he had been as Surgeon to an East-India ship, he had had a severe inflammation of his liver, which had been cured by the usual remedies. He had previously told me, that a few days before, when coming down by sea from London to Edinburgh, he had been shipwrecked on the coast of Lincolnshire, and on that occasion had been, for several hours, much exposed to cold and wet. Having thus come to a right understanding with my patient, I left him under sentence of a large bleeding without delay, and some other remedies of less consequence. Before six in the morning I was called again to him with another still more urgent message, importing that he was much worse, and seemed to be dying. I found him really much worse,

worse, and in a very alarming situation ; the cause of which was soon explained to me. When he, in consequence of my advice at my former visit, desired that a Surgeon might be sent for to bleed him immediately, the waiter (for my patient chanced to be lodged either in a tavern, or in lodgings adjoining to and connected with one) told him he had no occasion to go far for a Surgeon, as there was one just at hand. This happened to be a worthy member of the Royal College, well known as an honest Fellow, but withal a very thirsty soul, who at that time was in the very act of moistening his clay in that tavern. As soon as he saw his patient, and learned that he wished to be bled without delay, "Bleed you, Sir," (said the jovial knight of the illustrious order of the scalpel), "you have no occasion to be bled ; a bottle of wine will do you much more good." The patient was too easily prevailed on to try, not indeed the whole bottle, which probably would have done his business effectually, but some glasses of wine ; the effect of which was more than enough to convince him of his error and his danger, and to make him send on a violent hurry for me again, and at the same time for another Surgeon, of a very different character from the former, and not the least of an honest fellow. This other Surgeon, by name Mr James Russell, I found waiting in the patient's antichamber ; for he had got the start of me, and had examined the patient before I arrived. I immediately asked him whether *he* had any scruples about bleeding the patient ? "None at all," answered he, with great gravity, and peculiar dryness ; "if you prescribe it, I shall do it." That, I told him, was all very well ; but begged he would say frankly whether he had any doubts as to the propriety of it. He then told me very frankly, that it was plain the man had no other chance for his life. So to work he went immediately, and bled him largely, and repeated the same operation a few hours after, by which the patient was soon and easily cured.

It was impossible to see such a striking example of the evils and dangers to which patients may be exposed by the personal characters and habits of their medical advisers and operators, without some painful reflections on the hard lot of those poor patients, who, either in their own houses, or in the Hospital, were entrusted to the care and skill of such a practitioner: for that honest Fellow of the Royal College attended and operated in his turn in the Royal Infirmary. If, even on that slight occasion, instead of playing the Doctor, and deciding on the expediency, or rather inexpediency, of the bleeding which I had prescribed, he had endeavoured to perform it, as was his professional duty, it might have been still worse for the patient: it might have ended in cutting an artery, and in the loss of his arm or of his life. Or if the practitioner had been called to a patient with a fractured skull, or a strangulated hernia, very possibly the same favourite remedy, the bottle of wine, would have been his first prescription. But if he had thought of the difficult and dangerous operations required in those cases respectively, and had endeavoured to perform them, the result probably would have been equally fatal to the patients. Certain wise men have held, that some Physicians prescribe, but I believe it has never yet been discovered that any Surgeons operate, as well when drunk as when sober.

As I had no right and no power, at that time, to interfere in the management of the Royal Infirmary, and did not even know that it was possible to get rid of that cruel evil in the surgical department of it; and as I did not wish to break a bruised reed, for the honest fellow to whom I allude was scarce more fortunate in point of general estimation and professional employment, than he had been in that one case; I took no further notice of the adventure at that time. But long after, indeed after his death, I learned, with much edification, that his character and habits were well known, by decisive experience, in the Infirmary. He was par-

ticularly distinguished from all the other honest Fellows of his college by his extraordinary care of the Surgeons instruments. He even insisted on having, while he attended in rotation, a separate key to the presses in which they are kept under the immediate care of the Surgeons Clerk or House-furgeon ; and by the help of that key used to pay frequent private visits to them. The reason of this extraordinary attention was not known for some time ; but at last the Matron discovered that he had a patient in that press, in the last stage of a consumption, to whom his visits were paid : namely, the Brandy bottle.

Though none of his brethren, at least that ever I heard of, were supposed to visit that Brandy bottle privately, yet several of them occasionally did so in public, at broad noon, without the smallest reserve or delicacy ; as I can testify from my most certain knowledge : for many a time have I seen several of them prime with a good dram of brandy, just before they went to the theatre, to the final consultation, and operation, on some unhappy patient. But I must do them the justice to say, that they drank their brandy most scientifically, out of a cupping-glass. I can even remember distinctly, though after an interval of four or five and twenty years, that one day a good deal of exquisite chirurgical wit passed on the subject of what might probably have been the last application of the said cupping-glass : occasioned, as I understood, by one of their number being a little squeamish on that point ; which the rest of them seemed to think of no consequence. I must also do them the justice to testify, that I never saw nor suspected that any of them took such an overcharge of the brandy as some naval and military heroes are said to have done just before going to battle ; or, as that valiant Knight, Moore of Moore-Hall, did ; of whom we read, in the Authentic Ballad which records his perilous adventure with the Dragon of Wantley, that before he went forth to fight that horrid monster, “ to make him strong
“ and

“ and mighty, he drank by the tale fix pots of ale and a quart
 “ of aqua vitæ;” which judicious preparation succeeded so well
 with him, that he slew the Dragon by a single kick on the breech.
 It was never even suspected that any one of those brandy-drinking
 gentlemen had the smallest distrust of his own prowess. But I
 think it possible that some of the more classical of them had in
 mind Horace’s very just compliments to his favourite Wine Cask :

Tu lene tormentum ingenio admoves

Plerumque duro : tu sapientium

Curas, et arcanum jocoſo

Conſilium retegis Lyæo :

Tu ſpem reducis mentibus anxiiſ,

Vireſque, et addiſ cornua pauperi.

* * * * *

Narratur et priſci Catoniſ

Sæpe mero caluiſſe Virtus.

But more probably their chief or only purpoſe was to ſettle their
 nerves, and make their hands ſteady ; which was certainly very
 laudable, and in ſome of them, I believe, very neceſſary. It is
 but fair to preſume that they acted on ſound medical principles ;
 and in ſtrict obedience to the well known precept in the Medicina
 Salernitana, (a moſt precious work compiled about 700 years ago,
 for the benefit of Robert Duke of Normandy, the ſon of William
 the Conqueror).

Si nocturna tibi noceat potatio vini,

Hoc tu mane bibas iterum, et fuerit medicina.

Which precept, I firmly believe, has been more generally adopted
 and practiſed than any aphoriſm of Hippocrates. I ſcarce think
 they could have committed ſo abſurd a blunder as to apply to
 ſtrong waters what Ovid has ſaid of the vile ſpring waters of a
 certain place in Arcadia,

Ambiguſ ſuſpectuſ aquis : quas nocte timeto :

Noctē nocent potæ : ſine noxa luce bibuntur.

But it is of no moment what was the cause of those cupping-glasses of brandy : There can be no doubt what the effect of them soon would be.

I am sure all the senior Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, who shall *choose* to remember the transactions of their own Society, between sixteen and seven and twenty years ago, must know, from the occurrences that I have stated, the names of those honest Fellows to whose conduct the preceding observations relate : and I have little or no doubt that most or all of them can easily give the names of two others of their Brethren, whose conduct showed how very near a Fellow of their College may approach to the savage or the brute, without the help of either wine or brandy.

One of these worthies was distinguished by the most arrogant conceit of his own superior talents, and knowledge, and professional skill ; and by his most sovereign contempt for most or all of his professional brethren and their accomplishments. These sentiments I have heard him express without reserve : as I presume almost every person did, who had the happiness of his acquaintance. But the display which he gave of his character and sentiments, by his conduct in the Hospital, was far beyond the reach of the most lively imagination to have supposed, in drawing a fictitious character of the same kind. The first act of his administration was to change at once all the dressings that his predecessor had ordered for the patients in the Surgeons wards. Nothing could shew more strongly what he thought of his predecessor and of himself. I have been told that he acted in that manner repeatedly : I suppose, whenever he attended in rotation. A very eminent Physician still living, DR CURRIE of Liverpool, was an eye-witness of one of those exhibitions ; and in his letter to Mr Benjamin Bell, (answers to Mr B. B.'s queries), an extract of which has already been printed and distributed in the course of this discussion, (*Appendix to Mr B.'s Observations*, page 6. and 7.), speaks of it in terms of the utmost indignation and
horror.

horror. His words are these: " I cannot calmly think of what
 " I have often seen of your system of attendance. How many poor
 " patients have been injured by it! Twenty-two years ago, when
 " I was attending your Hospital, the day on which the attending
 " Surgeon went off at the end of his two months,
 " now in his grave, ordered the whole of the dressings of every
 " patient to be changed in an instant, with every mark of con-
 " tempt. The impression sunk so deep, that I shall never lose it.

" If, indeed, there were no other motives for selection in the
 " attendants on Hospitals, the moral qualities requisite in Medi-
 " cal Practitioners would be sufficient. What mischief may not
 " be done by a wild Theorist, acting under the influence of vani-
 " ty and self-conceit, in concert, as they generally are, with a ca-
 " pricious temper and unfeeling heart; where his conduct is un-
 " controuled, where life is at stake, and poverty and sickness the
 " unresisting objects: yet people of this kind must be admitted
 " into Colleges and Corporations; as appears clearly to have been
 " the case in the instance to which I refer."

Indeed the words suppressed by Mr Bell, from considerations of delicacy, in printing that extract of Dr Currie's letter, were, if possible, more characteristic of Dr C's sentiments than all that he has printed of it. It was not the person's name that in Dr C.'s original letter stood where Mr B. in printing it, has put the blank; but a short and pithy description of him in these words: " A savage,
 " now in his grave," &c. To convey to those unacquainted with such matters a just notion of the atrocity of his procedure, in changing at once all the dressings directed by his predecessor, it is sufficient to observe, that *probably* all the patients in the Surgeons Wards had been treated tenderly and skilfully by the Surgeon whose attendance in rotation had just ceased. According to Mr John Bell's doctrine, approved and sanctioned by his friends and clients, that every Fellow of their Royal College is perfectly
 qualified

qualified to do the Hospital duty, all the patients, before that change of all the dressings was made, *must* have been as well treated as possible. If so, there is much difficulty in conceiving that they were equally well treated, when and after that complete change was made. And if nine out of ten, or nineteen out of twenty of them, were doing well under their former treatment, which is highly probable; to give up the certainty of relief or cure which they enjoyed, for an uncertainty, was to expose them needlessly to lengthened sufferings and increased danger: especially if the new dressings ordered were such as no other Surgeon approved of, or, after seeing repeatedly their bad or no effects, would have employed. This, from what I have heard in conversation with some other Surgeons, the contemporaries of that Savage, and from what I remember was one of his favourite dressings, I strongly suspect was the case.

Painful, disgusting, and shocking as this subject is, I must not quit it, without mentioning one little specimen more of the intellectual and moral endowments of another Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, who, in his turn, used to attend in the Hospital. This gentleman, though nowise deficient in the essential accomplishments of a good opinion of himself, and due contempt for many of his brethren, was chiefly distinguished, as far as I know, (and I knew him well some twenty or five and twenty years ago), by very high notions of his personal and professional dignity. This sentiment, as Mr John Bell's Answer to me fully testifies, is still cherished by many worthy Members of the Royal College of Surgeons; but it prevailed equally among many of them before he or his Answer were ever heard of. It happened, many years ago, but still within my memory, that the Managers found it necessary to limit the use of wine (Port) in the Hospital, which some of the practitioners, both Physicians and Surgeons, were thought to prescribe for their patients unnecessarily, and too freely. It was said, whether with strict truth, or only as a good illustration of the nature

nature and greatness of the evil, I never took the trouble to ascertain, that about that time the annual expence of the Hospital for Port wine was more than that for all other medicines put together. It certainly had become disproportionately great. All of us, I believe, got a general admonition on this subject from the Managers; and I know that I, at that time one of the two Clinical Professors, got a very strong private admonition about it from Dr Cullen. Very lately, long after my former Memorial was distributed, I chanced to hear one of the Senior Surgeons mention particularly, what I had some imperfect remembrance of having heard long before, that some of the Surgeons, who were said to be greater offenders in the waste of wine than any of the Physicians were, had paid so little regard to the general admonition, that the Managers were obliged, not only to repeat it, but to enforce it with another regulation, that no Port wine should be given to patients without permission from a Manager, which the Surgeon was to apply for in case of real necessity; and which, it may be presumed, would never be refused in such a case, any more than the permission of two Managers to open the body of a patient who has died in the Infirmary. Every person who has practised in it knows, that this, which may do good to thousands, and can do harm to none, is not allowed to be done without the consent of the relations or friends of the deceased, if any such are at hand, and without the formal permission, in writing, of two of the Managers. The purpose of these long established regulations is not to prevent that which is right from being done, but to prevent it from being done *improperly*, in violation of the feelings of those most nearly concerned, for the gratification of idle curiosity, or as making the Hospital a school, and the dead patients the subjects of anatomical instruction. The opening of the body of a dead patient in the Infirmary, even in cases in which it is most to be wished for the improvement of medicine and the good of mankind, often is prevented,

vented, by the relations or friends of the deceased refusing their consent; but I doubt whether it ever was, or ever will be, prevented by the Managers refusing their permission; certainly never without very strong reasons, and such as are not likely to occur.

It would have been but fair to presume, till there was some experience or evidence of the opposite conduct on their part, that the Managers would act at least as wisely, humanely, and liberally, with respect to their formal permission of giving Port wine to a poor patient whose situation really needed it, and as such, was deliberately made known to them by the attending Surgeon. But then, the honour and dignity of the profession, so cruelly outraged by that order of the Managers, were not to be meanly sacrificed by acquiescing in it without a struggle; and in one heart at least (I trust there were not many such among the Surgeons) that noble principle seems to have been paramount to all sentiments of reason, of duty, and of humanity. A poor man under cure, on account of a severely shattered leg, came to be in such a situation, that wine was highly necessary for him, and the Surgeon very properly ordered it; but being reminded by the clerk that it was necessary to ask the permission of one of the Managers, broke out instantly, "Ask permission of the Managers! God damn them, "do they think I will ask their permission," &c. Accordingly he did not ask the necessary permission; the poor man did not get the wine which he so much needed, and died in a few days. The accident had happened in the service of a gentleman, who very humanely sent the poor man from a considerable distance to Edinburgh, recommending him to a Surgeon with whom he was intimately acquainted, in order to get him admitted into the Infirmary. This other Surgeon, from whom I heard these very edifying particulars, and who for many years was employed by the gentleman in question to pay an annuity to the poor man's widow, calling to enquire about the patient soon after the demur with respect to the wine,

wine, and finding that he was sinking fast, sent him wine from his own house immediately, but too late to save his life.

I doubt whether any human laws provide punishment adequate to such misdemeanors: probably not; as no lawgivers could foresee any thing in human conduct at once so absurd and so atrocious: and if they were punished with just rigour, it would be no reparation to those who had suffered or died by them; nor would it prevent other patients from suffering in the same way, or in numberless other ways, by the folly, the arrogance, the quarrels, the caprice, or the brutality, of their Physicians or Surgeons, if all the members of such numerous corporations had a right to practise on them indiscriminately. If such a right were established, the most notorious offender could not be ousted of it without a violent struggle, and a formidable law-suit, invidious in its commencement, tedious and expensive in its process, precarious in its issue; and withal of such a nature and tendency, that if it ended favourably for the sick poor in the Hospital, it must bring ruin and infamy on those medical practitioners whose misconduct gave occasion to it.

Among the other instances of great rhetorical merit in Mr John Bell's Answer to me, I must not omit to mention the admirable dexterity with which he contrives to allude to one of *my* quarrels with one of *his* professional brethren; who of course could not fail to be the object of his warmest esteem, admiration, and affection.

“ Nor shall we ever envy that man his private feelings, who can differ from him on a moral cause.” These are the words of Mr John Bell; irresistibly implying that my conduct in that business must have been very bad: but he knew too well what he was about, to venture to mention any particulars; and he was sure that I would not mention them, because I could not do so without the greatest indelicacy to some individuals, to whom I should be sorry to give pain, and without bringing on myself the reproach of

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vanity

vanity and ostentation. This I say, in full confidence, that he knew abundantly well the particulars of that story; which, much against my inclination, and in spite of my utmost endeavours to keep it secret, was very generally known a dozen years ago. If he really did not know the particulars of that story, it must have been entirely his own fault; if he had chosen to enquire, he might have learnt them minutely, and on complete authority; the original papers relating to it, for good reasons, having been carefully preserved, and being to this hour in my possession. On the same supposition (of his not knowing the particulars, or even the subject and general tenor of my conduct in that unpleasant business), it must be acknowledged that there is infinite merit, not only in point of candour, but in point of talents, in alluding to it so briefly, but at the same time so significantly and decisively, as a matter of reproach, and one in which I had been notoriously to blame.

An orator of inferior genius and skill would no doubt have endeavoured to tell the story in a manner unfavourable to me; which would have spoiled all. I doubt whether even the genius of Mr John Bell can accomplish such an undertaking; but if he thinks otherwise, he has my hearty consent, provided only he can obtain the consent of his dear friend, my opponent on that occasion, to try to make the best, or the worst, that he can of it.

Nor is that the only instance of his perfect skill in that figure of rhetoric which is called by the French *reticence*; or of his dexterity in applying to persons, things, and sentiments, the maxim which originally, I believe, related only to little superfluous words, *supprimit orator quod rusticus edit ineptus*. He says not one word of my conduct to one of my own professional brethren; with which I must presume he was well acquainted, as the person to whom I allude recommended him to Mr Peter Hill, bookseller in Edinburgh, and prevailed, or assisted to prevail, on Mr Hill, to undertake the expence and risk of printing and publishing his answer to me. This I had the pleasure to hear of accidentally, just about the time
when

when his Pamphlet came out: but, wishing to have complete information on the subject, I begged of my friend Mr Creech, to ask Mr Hill, whether the fact was so. He very obligingly did so; and informed me that Mr Hill assured him it was just as I had been told. I presume I owe that good office, on the part of my learned brother, to his resentment against me, for having told him, near three years before, that I should never again meet with him in the exercise of my profession. I had never had that honour but in the course of my attendance on *one* patient, to whom I was called in, after he had been for many weeks under the care of that other physician; whom, though much my senior, I had not chanced to meet with in consultation till after I had practised physic in Edinburgh twenty-two years. I had not even heard of his mode of practice; and of course was completely astonished at the specimen he gave me of it. I soon discovered that my learned brother was not only a Physician, but a walking Dispensary: for scarce had I time to tell the patient what medicines we had in our consultation agreed to give him, when he put his hands in his pockets, and produced the medicines in question; or what he chose to give as them. As the patient did not seem surpris'd, I took it for granted that he was accustomed to this mode of proceeding, and approved of it; and therefore I let it pass without animadversion. The same practice being continued day after day, I discovered, in little more than a week, that my learned brother sometimes gave the patient *quid pro quo*, to the very evident risk of his life. This the Doctor was obliged to confess, as I had taken care to give the patient a receipt for the proper medicine, which he got from a good apothecary, and compared with what his physician had dispensed to him.

Worse than all, I soon discovered that he paid separate private visits to the patient, at which he unsaid all that had been said after consultation at our joint public visits; and urged the patient, and at one time prevailed on him, to take again a medicine, which had

operated on him violently and unfavourably; on which account it had, at my instance, been discontinued: for I was as certain as I can be of any thing in physic, that the patient must have died under the continued use of it. Finding that, after two very plain but civil admonitions from me, he still persisted in that improper conduct, I took my resolution without further delay; and told him peremptorily that I never would consult with him again.

As soon as I had fairly renounced all intercourse with my professional brother, I mentioned the circumstances of the story, without his name, to another of our profession, who instantly guessed the name of the offender. This excited my curiosity, and I tried the same experiment on several others, both Physicians and Surgeons, all of whom, at once, guessed the same person; and some of whom gave me similar, or, if possible, worse instances, of the same mode of proceeding on his part, of which they had in their own practice had ample experience. This of course fully confirmed my resolution never again to expose myself to such vexations, or my patients to such dangers. I have since learnt, without much surprise, that notwithstanding my gentle admonition, that physician has persevered in the same laudable practice, which has been attended with that kind of success that was to be expected from it. I shall only add, on this point, that I hope Mr John Bell, however unfavourably he may think of me in all respects, will at least give me credit for truth and sincerity, when I assure him, that I do not envy him his friend; but, on the contrary, heartily wish him joy of such a friend, and wish that he may find many such worthy friends.

There is yet, in his Answer to me, another specimen of the same figure of rhetoric, so complete and exquisite of its kind, that to most people it will appear incredible and impossible. Indeed I must confess, that I never saw nor heard of any thing *simile aut secundum* to it. But every person who is possessed of his admirable

Answer

Answer may in a moment convince himself of the reality of that masterpiece of rhetorical art to which I allude. Prefixed, by way of Preface, to the Answer itself, is a letter, subscribed (by appointment of the Meeting of the Junior Members of the Royal College of Surgeons) by Walter Harkness, in which I am charged with gross misrepresentation of the character and conduct of the younger Surgeons; and Mr John Bell is by them requested to draw up an Answer to my Memorial. This he has accordingly done, in a manner worthy of himself and them, as we have already seen. But in no respect is his Answer more meritorious than in this, that, in the whole of it, not one word is said of the complete vindication which I had given him of my conduct and motives in publishing my Memorial. There is not even in his pamphlet the most distant allusion to that interesting correspondence which we had in August 1805, soon after my Memorial was distributed, and in less than a fortnight after the task of answering it had been imposed upon him by his younger brethren. In the beginning of his pamphlet, and indeed in the whole of it, from end to end, I am represented to the public as guilty of gross misrepresentation of the character and conduct of the younger Surgeons, even after he had received from me the most complete refutation of that groundless charge. If he did not think my refutation of it in every respect complete and satisfactory, my letter, containing such imperfect vindication of my own conduct, must have been to him an exquisite subject for animadversion and reproach. From his own silence with respect to it I may therefore infer, that he found it impossible to make that use of it. I may also infer, that his younger brethren, his clients, to whom, of course, it was his duty, without delay, to communicate my letter of vindication, could find no flaw in it; and consequently I was obliged to think, that he and they were determined, right or wrong, to represent me to the public in that odious light, notwithstanding

withstanding the most explicit disavowal of any such unworthy purpose on my part, and the most complete refutation of such a charge, in point of fact, that they themselves could desire or conceive. I may well call my vindication complete ; for, on perusing and considering it attentively, I am convinced, that, if I had gone but one step farther, they would have considered it as irony and burlesque. Of the justness of this opinion every person may judge who shall take the trouble to read my letter to Mr John Bell, printed in this Memorial, (page 41. to page 74.). In one respect such an ample vindication was plainly unnecessary ; for what one party of the Surgeons, Junior and Senior indiscriminately, was pleased to call gross misrepresentation of the character and conduct of the younger Surgeons, in the first place, was no misrepresentation at all, but a plain truth, so obvious to common sense, that nothing less than actual experience of the fact could have made me believe that any individual, or any set of men, would presume to call it in question. In the second place, Supposing it to be a misrepresentation, as gross, as false, as injurious, as ever was contrived, it was plainly no misrepresentation of mine, but the work of their own predecessors, Deacon Kennedy and his accomplices. They, long before I was born, publicly and vehemently maintained, that Surgeons acquired great improvement by much practice, especially by the frequent performance of operations ; that all young Surgeons had great need of such improvement, which they could get no where so well as in an Hospital ; that a few Surgeons, selected from the rest for Hospital-duty, would soon acquire such high improvement and reputation, that they would engross the most lucrative practice in Surgery ; and that to preserve an equality among the Surgeons, it was necessary that all of them should be allowed to attend and operate in the Hospital, indiscriminately and by rotation. On the faith of this misrepresentation, if such it be, that bargain between the Managers and Surgeons was made

which

which I reprobate, and have shewn to be unjust and cruel to the patients, and of little or no benefit to the Surgeons.

In the third place, Far from having expressed any unfavourable opinion of the younger Surgeons, I have, in many parts of my Memorial, expressed the very opposite sentiments. I went so far as to give it as my opinion, that, if two or three of the younger Surgeons, or if the next who should become Fellows of their College, were appointed permanently, or for a long period, Surgeons to the Infirmary, the practice of Surgery in it would soon be on a better footing than it has been for many years. In another passage of my former Memorial, I gave it as my opinion, that probably from the first, and certainly very soon, this selection of Surgeons for permanent attendance at the Hospital would be made from the younger Fellows of their College.

If I, or if any person, had ventured to say, that all the Junior Surgeons, even from the hour when they became Members of the College, were equal to the best of their Seniors in professional skill, and manual dexterity as operators, it would have been regarded, not only as an extravagant falsehood, but as a malicious joke or sarcasm on their Senior Brethren: nor do I believe, that, till Mr John Bell's Answer appeared, such a sentiment had ever been announced to the world, either in jest or earnest.

For these reasons, while I admit the great rhetorical merit of suppressing my vindication of myself, I must be allowed to consider it as the most uncandid proceeding I ever heard of. They cannot pretend that any considerations of delicacy towards me, whom it was the chief purpose of their Answer to revile and abuse, as a monster of wickedness, and equally an object of general contempt and abhorrence, or that any scruples about printing my private correspondence with Mr John Bell, restrained him or his friends from making it the subject of their most public and severe animadversion. The printing, as he has done, by way of Preface to

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his Answer to me, the correspondence which passed between him and his clients with respect to me and my Memorial, seemed to imply, in point of candour, that all papers and documents relating to that subject should be made equally public. They surely would have regarded it as a strange and uncandid proceeding on my part, if I had printed in this Memorial my letters to Mr John Bell, suppressing his letters to me, which contained his reasons for appearing, contrary to his own deliberate opinion, and contrary even to his own declared resolution, as the Champion and Advocate of that party of the Surgeons who have engaged in a contest with the Managers of the Infirmary. But further, I beg it may be observed, that, as soon as I knew that such was his resolution, I gave the most explicit permission to him and his friends to use all manner of freedom with that letter of mine, just as much as with my printed paper. I had previously not only given him permission, but begged of him to shew that letter to his friends and professional brethren. Indeed I took it for granted, as a matter of course, that my letter of vindication, with his animadversions on it, would make a conspicuous figure in his Answer to my Memorial; and all I begged of him was, that he would abstain from all remarks on grammatical or verbal inaccuracies, such as words wanting, or twice written, or misplaced; a kind of protest which I thought myself well intitled to enter. After all, I doubt not but Mr John Bell will contrive to justify himself, by shewing that he has only acted in strict conformity to Horace's well-known maxim, *Et quæ desperat tractata nitefcere posse relinquit.*

Whatever wrong Mr John Bell may have done me, by suppressing, on some occasions, a great part of the truth, I am scarce entitled to complain of it, at least not without doing him the justice to testify, that he has made ample compensation for those defects,

fects, by the most liberal additions to the truth on some other occasions; by the discovery and enunciation of truths, particularly relating to myself, but perfectly unknown to me; and by the assertion of truths diametrically opposite to those which I had formerly known, and which still may be established by incontrovertible evidence.

The most splendid example of this kind of rhetorical art, that I have ever met with, one far beyond the reach of any ordinary genius, and such as the greatest lawyers at the bar could not have attempted, nay hardly thought of, is to be found in the 44th page of his first section. There he does me the honour to mention me “as an author distinguished in the literary and polemical world;” “the *fifteenth* in a direct line of a Dynasty of Professors.”

I know not how to express my gratitude to Mr John Bell, for this long, learned, and illustrious pedigree, with which he has so liberally favoured me. This favour is the greater, that it is altogether surprising to me; no fewer than eleven of the fourteen of my direct lineal ancestors, thus conjured into past existence by his magic power, being utterly unknown to me; and, to the best of my information and belief, equally unknown to every person in the learned and in the unlearned world. They come however in excellent time to make a stem for my genealogical tree; a piece of furniture which, with shame and sorrow I must own, I have never possessed. But before I can, with any propriety, make this use of my eleven new Great-grandfathers, I must beg of Mr John Bell to favour me with some authentic information of the countries and the Universities in which they were Professors, and also of the several sciences which they professed. Perhaps he can prove, that the first seven or eight of them flourished in Terra Australis Incognita, and held Professorships in the University of Utopia. That they were not all, especially the first three or four of that long and learned dynasty, Professors of any science, in any University in Scotland,

must be pretty evident from the following considerations. Fifteen generations, according to the well-known principles of chronology, which allow three generations to a century, extend to five hundred years; but five hundred, nay, even four hundred years ago, there was neither Professor, nor University, nor Science, in Scotland.

If Mr John Bell's text had been given without any note or commentary, it might have passed for a flight of his original genius, similar to those which he has displayed in descanting on my person, character, and talents; and then his positive assertion of the marvellous number of my ancestors who have been professors, would have required no other notice, than his no less positive, and equally true assertions, that I was "born in Brobdignag, and "educated in Laputa; that, like the inhabitants of that land of "science, I have one eye turned upwards to the heavens, while "the other looks inwards upon my own great mind; that I step "over and over him and his brethren in all the pride of my gigantic stature; and lift aside the lappets of my coat to let them "pass unhurt beneath the stride of my colossal limbs." But Mr John Bell's text, already quoted, is enriched and enforced by a most ample commentary, in the form of a marginal note; which, being of his own composition, must be regarded as of equal authority with his text itself. His note is in these words: "We "mention this on the *same* authority. He is the fifteenth hereditary professor in a direct line; *every year* this is mentioned "publicly at lecture; and we think it right to allow the author "this apology for some very extravagant sentiments concerning "his own importance."

First, as to the first of these short sentences; "we mention this "on the *same* authority." The *same* authority must mean the authority last quoted; but the authority last quoted by him, only eight lines before the reference to this note, is my own Memorial:

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but surely nothing like his marvellous assertion about the number of my ancestors who had been Professors, or any allusion to them, is to be found in that Memorial from end to end.

Next, as to the clause of the sentence, “ *every year* this is mentioned *publicly at lecture.*” This must be understood to mean, mentioned by *me*, in *my* lectures, publicly, every year. The purpose of such an assertion cannot be mistaken. Mr John Bell certainly wished his own assertion to be believed; I mean with respect to my mentioning in my lectures every year that absurd and extravagant falsehood: which certainly imports, that he wished to represent me to the public both as a liar and an idiot. I doubt whether I should ever have had an opportunity to utter such a bounce even a second time; and I am sure I could have had no occasion to repeat it every year in my lectures: for, unquestionably, if I had even once hazarded such an assertion, my character must have been well established in both respects; as a liar, for asserting seriously what I could not believe, and must have known to be false; as an idiot, for telling a lie which no body could believe. Notwithstanding Mr John Bell’s positive assertion in his text, and the conduct of his brethren and clients, in sanctioning, by their vote of thanks, his publication, I can scarce suppose either him or them so ignorant of the principles of chronology, of the common duration of human life, and of the history of science in their own country, as ever to have given credit to that marvellous account of my pedigree, if they had all heard me publicly assert it; which certainly neither they nor any other person ever did. But indeed his great anxiety to give *me* as the author of that story, irresistibly implies that he thought it false, but wished to throw the infamy of it on me.

The attempt on his part is most honourable; and the approbation which it has met with from his brethren and clients is quite characteristic of their disposition and talents. I highly approve of

what he and they have done, and most earnestly exhort them all to continue their honest and diligent endeavours for the same laudable purpose. Far from taking amiss their conduct, I shall be much gratified by it; and I can assure them, nay demonstrate to them *a priori*, that they will not labour in vain. They may proceed with confidence on this irrefragable dilemma. Either I am, or I am not, that liar and idiot which they wish to represent me. If I am, it is very fit that I should be made publicly known as such; and they will have great credit for making me known. If I am not that liar and idiot which they wish to make me be thought, it is equally fit that *they* should be made known to the public; and they will have, and will deserve, still greater credit with all mankind, for making themselves thoroughly known; which they will soon and most effectually do, by a few more attempts of the same candid, liberal, ingenious, and spirited kind.

It would be great injustice to the unknown author of an excellent joke on me, and a very successful imposition on the public, not to mention here the ingenious device, of publishing in the Edinburgh newspapers in April last, an advertisement in my name, purporting to be the announcing of a book written by me on Scottish Law, and on the number of our Judges, &c. By this innocent and very witty forgery, he had the pleasure of making it believed, for three days, not in Edinburgh only, but all over Scotland, that I had gone stark mad. Any book written by me on such a subject would have been pretty good evidence of insanity: but to make this point doubly sure, there was subjoined to the title of my pretended work, a long paragraph, a kind of puff of my former Memorial and of myself, that was quite decisive, both as to my insanity, and the sentiments of the author of the forgery. As it could not be properly contradicted till the next days of publishing the same newspapers, the joke took so well in the

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the distant parts of Scotland, that many commissions for copies of Gregory on Scotch Law came pouring in on Mr Creech from all quarters. If I am rightly informed, some of our Lawyers, and even of our Judges, were *taken in* by that forgery.

It is hard to say whether Mr John Bell's reference to my annual lectures, in proof of his marvellous assertion, or his reference to my former printed Memorial, be the greater effort of his peculiar genius: but I think the latter is the more meritorious of the two; forasmuch as every person who could procure a sight of that Memorial, and, in the first place, *all* his clients, to each of whom I had given a copy of it, could easily ascertain that the reference was false; whereas the many hundreds, nay some thousands, who have attended my Academical Lectures, could only testify *negatively*, that they never heard me utter that extravagant falsehood.

That all whom it concerns may have a just notion of Mr John Bell's merit in this specimen of his rhetorical art, and perceive clearly what noble additions he has made to a few plain truths, I shall state briefly what the facts are of which he has made such admirable use.

It is a melancholy truth, that I, and my ancestors for several generations, have lived each of us by his own individual wits: and what is worse, I fear it must be the case with the family for several generations to come, if the race shall continue so long. Certainly not one of us yet has had brains enough to amass a fortune, for the benefit of his posterity: which many of the dullest greasy rogues, that ever sold cheese or tallow, have accomplished with ease. I acknowledge that my father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, as well as myself, have all been Professors; and as my father's elder brother was a Professor also, my dynasty of Professors, as Mr John Bell is pleased to call it, has been five in number. But I never dreamed of regaling my pupils with this very interesting piece of my family history
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in my Academical Lectures ; or of calling the attention of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary to it in my former Memorial : for this plain reason, that it had not the most distant relation to the Theory or Practice of Physic, or to the question about the proper mode of attendance of the Surgeons in this Hôpital. It was reserved for the superior genius of Mr John Bell to discover that it was of the highest importance, if not quite decisive, in that question : else surely he would not have introduced it, and insisted on it so strongly, in his Answer to me. The only part of it that ever I mentioned in my Academical Lectures, and that not annually, but occasionally, was the remarkable fate of my great-grandfather, who was Professor of mathematics in this University near a hundred and thirty years ago. When a young man he lost his sight *suddenly*, by the disease called amaurosis or gutta serena, which proved *fatal to him in a few days*.

This I mentioned to my pupils as a curious medical fact ; the disease in question, though by no means rare, very seldom coming on suddenly, or proving fatal, and often coming on very slowly, and continuing, as in the case of Milton and many others, for twenty, thirty, or forty years, without impairing the general health of the body, or the faculties of the mind. My ancestor's case was a proof and example, that the cause producing that kind of blindness, might be so deep seated, and of such a nature, as soon to become fatal. I was particularly led, more than once, to mention his fate, having, in the course of twenty years attendance in the Hôpital as Clinical Professor, met with two cases of complete gutta serena, both of which went on rapidly, though not so fast as his, to a fatal termination.

But there was also in my family, though not among my lineal ancestors, another dynasty of Professor Gregorys, coeval with mine for eighty years, which furnished another still more curious and interesting

interesting illustration of an important principle in physic. Three brothers of them were at one time Professors of Mathematics ; implying a strong similarity of mental constitution, or of talents, and peculiar genius in them all. As such I have sometimes mentioned it in my lectures, in proof and illustration of what I conceive to be the principle on which the hereditary nature of some diseases depends. This I conceive to be resolvable into the more general and well known fact, of what is commonly called family likeness ; which is certainly often observable in many different individuals, though not in all, of the same family ; which often misses one or two, perhaps even more, generations, and appears in a very distant one ; which consequently must often be found among distant collaterals of the same race ; which is often remarkable not only with respect to features, complexion, stature, and form of body, but also with respect to every the most minute particular of the bodily constitution and health ; which in many cases is equally evident with respect to the constitution and peculiarities of the mind, not only as to the intellectual but even the moral faculties. All peculiarities of understanding, from perfect stupidity to the highest genius, and even to madness, including many modifications of genius, seem to belong to particular races. And every body knows, that many great and illustrious families have abounded in knaves, and others in fools and madmen, from generation to generation ; and that in some families the knave and fool are so exquisitely and happily blended, that it is impossible to say which prevails. Of peculiarity of genius in a family the best example, because it is the most common and familiar, is the genius for music ; which in some families is found great in almost every individual ; while in other families there is not the least of it. The genius for mathematics seems often to have been a hereditary peculiarity of the same kind. The two most remarkable instances of it, that I have heard of, and which accordingly I mentioned as
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such to my pupils, are the Bernouillis of Basle, and the Gregorys of Scotland; the latter, as I told them, I could mention without any vanity, as I had no pretensions to mathematical genius myself.

To complete the history of that collateral dynasty, I must mention, that two of the three brothers had each a son, who became Professors also; so that there were five Professors Gregory of that dynasty, as well as of mine. Moreover, two of their sisters had each a son, both of whom were Mathematicians and Professors; for, however marvellous it may appear, it is a certain fact, that, time immemorial, in the Gregory family, the women's side of the house has been almost as sure as the men's. The last of that dynasty in the female line, was the late Dr Reid of Glasgow; the other was the late Mr Professor Innes of Marischal College, Aberdeen.

It is not easy to conceive how all the three brothers should have been lineal ancestors of mine; and it is certain that neither they, nor their sons, nor their daughters were so; nor their father either. That very mathematical old gentleman was an elder brother of my great-grandfather. He was not even a Professor, but bred a merchant; and as such settled in Holland; when, by the death of his immediate elder brother, he succeeded to a small estate in the north of Scotland, of which he took possession, and commenced country gentleman. But, though no Professor, he was a good Mathematician; and withal of such indefatigable zeal and activity for the advancement of mathematical science, that he actually took the trouble to beget, in lawful wedlock, nine and twenty children; who of course eat up his estate; but he lived to see three of them Professors of Mathematics at the same time; one of them at Oxford, one at Edinburgh, and one at St Andrew's.

Of all these very edifying particulars, so interesting to the public in general, and especially to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary; as being essential to the decision of their question with the Surgeons, and accordingly introduced into the discussion by Mr John Bell,

Bell, with his usual bad luck in all matters of fact; the only one that ever I mentioned in my lectures, was the fact of the three brothers being Professors of Mathematics, which I mentioned very briefly, for the purpose already explained. It appears to me as characteristic and decisive of that curious principle which I wished to illustrate, as the more splendid example of family-likeness that occurred in one of the noblest families in England. In the joyous reign of Charles the Second, that Noble Family was reduced to three males; and there was not one Nose among them.

On no one point has Mr John Bell's bad luck, with respect to matters of fact, been worse than on this of the dynasty of fifteen Professors in a direct line.

He certainly chose his ground well; the general principle to which he trusted, *neganti incumbit probatio*, is irrefragably established, in all such candid discussions as his. In plain English, every man is to be held guilty of every thing infamous of which he is accused; and no man is entitled to be believed, or even heard in his own defence. Indeed, it is hardly worth a man's while to speak in his own defence; for a negative in general cannot be proved. If Mr John Bell had contented himself with declaring to the Managers, and to the public, that I told my pupils every year, publicly, at lecture, that one of my Grandmothers was a Judge, and the other a General Officer, I must have acquiesced in the charge, for I could not have proved the negative of it. He might have chosen to impute to me, as the assertor of them, ten thousand other extravagancies, equally incredible and disgraceful, not one of which I could have disproved. But, with his peculiar bad luck as to matters of fact, he has imputed to me an extravagant falsehood; of which I can prove the negative in the only way in which a negative can be proved; that is, by proving an affirmative, which is inconsistent with it. This is the nature and

force of the proof of an *alibi*: now in this case I can prove an *aliter*.

In an account of the life and writings of Dr John Gregory, my father, prefixed to the complete collection of his works, published here about fifteen years ago, those curious circumstances relating to the number of those of his name and family, who have been Professors, are mentioned, without any impropriety that I can see: but surely there would have been the most ridiculous impropriety in mentioning them in my academical lectures. That biographical account of my father was not written by me, but by a gentleman well known in the literary world, who now has a seat on the Bench in the Supreme Court of Justice in Scotland.

I however furnished the materials for it, and am no doubt answerable for the truth of the facts therein stated, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief. The account of the dynasties of Professors, given in that life of my father, will be found perfectly consistent with what I have here said of them, and absolutely inconsistent with Mr John Bell's marvellous story; which if any person chooses to believe, he must also believe, that I had deliberately given to my pupils, and to the public, the most complete means of detecting the gross falsehood that I annually endeavoured to impose on them.

Such absurdity and inconsistency appear to me almost as incredible, as that I should have been found in two different places at once.

All this however is to be understood with a *salvo jure* to Mr John Bell and his clients. If he or they choose to stake their character in point of probity and veracity on the truth of his assertion, by them adopted and sanctioned, as I stake mine on the contradiction of it, they are heartily welcome, or more than welcome. I shall consider their doing so as one of the greatest favours that they can confer on me. I beg likewise, that this offer

on my part may be understood to extend to all Mr John Bell's facts, which have been the subject of animadversion and contradiction in this Memorial, from page 113. to the end of it. To have made this offer sooner, as in discussing Mr John Bell's facts, which are inconsistent with authentic record, would have been considered by him as only inviting him to kick against the pricks. To have made the same offer when I was commenting on his splendid negative assertions, that I never entered the Surgeons wards, or the operation-room of this Hospital; never saw Mr Wood operate, never saw John Hunter operate, never even saw an operation, would have been still worse: for such negatives, even if they had been true, could not be proved. Nay, I scarce think, after the elapse of thirty years or more, that the opposite affirmatives, which I know to be true, can be proved; to have invited Mr John Bell therefore to prove such assertions, would not only have been nugatory, but would have had the appearance of some wish or design on my part to withdraw the attention of the managers and public from matters really serious or shameful on my part, by engaging it on subjects of no moment to me, or to any other body. But on the subject of the dynasties, and Mr John Bell's assertion with respect to my account of them, neither of those objections can be pretended. If what he has asserted in his note already quoted, be true, it is decisive with respect to me: and he may easily find some hundreds, or some thousands of witnesses, to confirm it on oath. I hope, therefore, he will not think it unreasonable in me to beg of him to produce, in confirmation of what he has asserted, the affidavits of two or three dozen only of my *quondam* pupils. It would be absurd to say, that I wish there may be in the world even one such perjured miscreant; but if there be any such, I heartily wish them to be known, and to meet with that general credit and estimation which they deserve. He will also, I hope, have the goodness to mention, and to get

his witnesses to testify on oath, how my pupils behaved when they heard me utter that absurd falsehood. Did they content themselves with getting up, and leaving me to read a *wall-lecture*, which certainly they ought to have done; or did they pull my gown off my shoulders, and toss me in a blanket? which, if not strictly proper, would have been almost excusable, and not in the least wonderful.—Whatever he and his clients may choose to think or to say of me, they cannot surely pretend, that *all* my pupils, nay, hardly that *any* of them, have *always* been such fools as to believe that extravagant falsehood, if they had heard me utter it. If even one of them had had but common sense, he must infallibly have in one day exposed me to the contempt and reproach of every student at the University.

From my considering so minutely that brilliant specimen of Mr John Bell's rhetorical talents, it may be judged that I think it of peculiar consequence, and wish to make an important use of it. Most men of candour, probity, and good sense, especially if they are unacquainted with medical controversies, and the great latitude as to all matters of fact assumed by those who engage in them, will hardly believe that Mr John Bell, even acting in the capacity of an Advocate, should assert, and that his clients, even acting as a party, should adopt and sanction what they could not believe, and must have known to be false. I consider Mr John Bell's marginal note already analyzed as complete proof of that point, which it is of consequence for me to establish: but to remove all doubts and difficulties with respect to it, I shall examine another almost equally brilliant specimen of the same mode of proceeding, in him, and in them. This is another marginal note of his, at the bottom of the 54th page of his first section. His words are these: " I was very early, says the Memorialist, admitted behind the curtain, and understood the mystery, and was " diverted with the young drones-sitting listening to the hum of
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“ the old drones.” I acknowledge having said, in my former Memorial, that, from my earliest youth, I was admitted behind the curtain, and let into the secret of the medical drama; neither of which propositions, I am sure, will ever be disputed by any person who knows what my education has been. It is the latter part of Mr John Bell’s note, which I consider as a good specimen of his genius, and well worthy of an ample commentary. He there exhibits me as representing my honoured instructors, Dr Monroe, Dr Cullen, Dr Black, Dr Home, and my own Father, as a parcel of old drones, and my fellow students as a parcel of young drones; implying probably that I was such a drone myself.

The peculiar merit of that part of his note consists in this, that not only I had never said or insinuated such an abominable and disgraceful falsehood, but that I had strongly expressed, and fully illustrated, the directly opposite and well-known truth. From the use which he hath made of my particular expressions, young drones, and old drones, it is plain that he had read and remembered the following sentence in my former Memorial, “ Our students, “ far from being a parcel of young drones, listening quietly to the “ hum of a few old drones, which is too generally the case in other “ Universities, are commonly as eager to learn as we are to teach “ them.” (*Mem. p. 207.*). It is impossible to conceive a more complete perversion of my plain meaning than Mr John Bell has accomplished, and his clients have approved and sanctioned. They cannot, therefore, think I do them any injustice when I suppose them to have acted in the same manner on many other points, on which his misrepresentation appears only from the general tenor of his discourse, but cannot be shewn so briefly and clearly by his falsification of one short sentence. And I think every intelligent and candid reader must, from these few samples, perceive the necessity of at least suspending his belief of every important fact, however confidently asserted by him, and sanctioned by the public approbation

approbation of his clients, till such time as he or they give some evidence of such valuable, and generally such marvellous facts.

Before I dismiss that first section of his Answer to me, I must take notice of Mr John Bell's heroic undertaking, to vindicate Dr Cullen from having acknowledged to my father, that he thought "*there must be a tub to amuse the whale*;" and from having actually endeavoured to amuse the whale in that way himself.

When Mr John Bell engaged in this perilous and fruitless adventure, he must surely have forgotten Pope's well-known couplet,

*One from all Grub-street will my fame defend,
And, more abusive, calls himself my friend.*

Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis tempus eget. Dr Cullen's character and talents need no vindication by Mr John Bell; and I have no occasion to offer any arguments to prove in what high estimation I have always held him and his writings.

For six and twenty years that I have taught as a Professor in the University of Edinburgh, first of the Theory, then of the Practice of Physic; and in conducting twenty Courses of Lectures as Clinical Professor, I have always availed myself of his writings, and of his verbal instructions; and have recommended in the strongest terms, his valuable works to the attentive perusal of all my pupils. This I conceive to be the most unequivocal proof of my opinion of his merits: far more honourable to him, as well as to myself, and much better for my pupils, than any profession of blind admiration for him and his doctrines; or any resolution never to dissent from him, on any point, either of theory or practice.

I take the liberty, as it is my duty, occasionally to differ from him, both in practice and theory; as he did from the many eminent medical authors who preceded him, and of whose valuable
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works he endeavoured to make the best use; and as I expect and wish that all my pupils shall do with respect to me, as the science and practice of medicine gradually improve.

“ A tub to amuse the whale! Could Cullen indeed say this, Cullen, the proud and jealous author of a doctrine which hath enslaved the Medical world, could he declare that doctrine to be a cheat? it is not to be believed,” &c. &c. “ Vanity must have restrained him, if no better sentiment dwelt in his mind.” (*Ans.* § 1. p. 52.) This is indeed setting about the business like a man of genius: to begin the vindication of Dr Cullen by pronouncing him proud and jealous for certain, and possibly vain also. I lived in intimacy with Dr Cullen for many years, and knew him well; yet never saw in him any symptoms of pride or jealousy. As he was a man of sense, not to say of superior talents, I cannot think he was proud: for pride is characteristic of folly. Nor can I conceive of what, or of whom, he was jealous: certainly not as the author of that doctrine which Mr John Bell says hath enslaved the medical world; for he was no more the author of that doctrine than Mr John Bell is. *Frederick Hoffman* was the author of that doctrine, as Mr John Bell ought to have known, and must have known, if he had ever looked into the writings of Hoffman, or had even read Dr Cullen’s own preface to his *First Lines of the Practice of Physic*. If Dr Cullen had taught that doctrine as originally his own, he must have been regarded, in the first place, by his own pupils, and in the next place, by the whole medical world, as the vilest mountebank that ever appeared on any stage; for at the time he was brought from Glasgow to Edinburgh, as Professor of Medicine and Chemistry in 1756, and for many years before, that doctrine, as delivered in the writings of *Hoffman*, had been adopted by the students of physic in this University, even though their Professors were endeavouring to teach them the doctrine of *Boerhaave*; whose pupils they had all been, and whose

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zealous admirers they continued to be ; as was the case with all his pupils. That fact, of the early adoption of Hoffman's doctrine by the students of physic in this University, I mention on the authority of my father ; who, in the years 1743, 4, and 5, was a student of physic, and a member of the Medical Society, in this University.

Dr Cullen, I believe, when he taught physic at Glasgow, had adopted the system of *Hoffman* ; and continued to teach it after he came to the University of Edinburgh : which contributed greatly to procure him the confidence, esteem, and admiration of the students, and in due time the well-known familiar appellation of *Old Spasim* ; which, however ludicrous it may appear, never implied on their part any disrespect to him ; but on the contrary the greatest regard and affection. He always taught *Hoffman's* doctrine, like a man of sense and candour, acknowledging, in the most explicit terms, who was the author of it, and doing justice to his great and original genius, his profound medical erudition, and the advantages which he had possessed by his long and extensive practice ; but not fervilely adopting and inculcating every sentence of *Hoffman's* doctrine ; on the contrary, proposing occasionally such corrections and improvements as he thought it required. Dr Cullen's preface to his First Lines is the most complete and authentic document on this point that can be desired or conceived : in it he not only mentions, in general, the system of *Hoffman*, as what he most approved and had adopted ; but gives (page 19, to 22, edit. 1784) a long quotation, much too long to quote here, for it extends to more than two pages, containing, in *Hoffman's* own words, the sum and substance of his Theory, and his Principles of Practice in Physic.

The whole of Dr Cullen's Theory and Practice of Physic, as contained in his First Lines, may be regarded as a kind of commentary on that passage of *Hoffman* ; and, in this view, it is as strict and faithful as Galen's Commentary on the Aphorisms of Hippocrates.

Hippocrates. It was impossible for any man to have acted more candidly and honourably than Dr Cullen did in this respect; all the merit of which Mr John Bell, by a few words of his magic pen, would do away, and substitute for it the shameful demerit of the very opposite conduct.

But it is evident, that Mr John Bell's chief object, in his masterly vindication of Dr Cullen, from the charge of sometimes throwing out a tub to amuse the whale, was to have an opportunity of expressing his distrust either of my veracity, or of my father's, or of both. Considering how much better his means of knowledge must be, than either I or my father could have, of what passed in the most private conversation between Dr Cullen and my father, and between my father and me, more than thirty years ago; considering also how many illustrious examples we have already seen, of his accuracy and fidelity with respect to all matters of fact; it would be equally unnecessary and unavailing to dispute that point with him. I shall therefore content myself with giving him the sequel of that story, which, I hope, will afford him some good materials for his next Philippic.

The subject of my father's friendly hint to Dr Cullen, which produced his ludicrous avowal of the expediency of throwing out a tub to amuse the whale, was the *Nervous System*; on which Dr Cullen used to descant, at great length, and with much vivacity and ingenuity, when he taught the Theory of Physic. To the best of my remembrance, he sometimes employed about two thirds of his course, that is eighty lectures out of one hundred and twenty, on the Nervous System; illustrating very fully, and in a most entertaining manner, many hypothetical theories, about the nature and properties of a supposed nervous fluid or æther; the existence of which still remains to be proved. He even amused himself and his pupils, by adopting and inculcating some ingenious opinions, never yet established by any competent evidence, concerning the

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operations of the brain and nerves, and their supposed fluid, in various functions of the body, as, for example, in the secretion, preparation, conveyance, and application of nourishment to every part of the body. (See *Dr Cullen's Institutions of Medicine, Part I. Physiology, parag. 293, 294. edit. 1777.*) Many of these opinions may be found stated in his own words in that little book, which was his text-book when he taught the Theory of Physic; and not only the opinions, but his mode of illustrating them, may be found in several of the Theses published in this University between the years 1766 and 1774.

Many of these opinions were tacitly, and others more than tacitly, given up by Dr Cullen himself, both in his lectures and in his printed text-book, his First Lines, when he taught the Practice of Physic. To the best of my remembrance, in the last fourteen years of his life, I never heard one word from him about vibrations or vibratiuncles in the nervous æther; or any thing about the nourishment being secreted from the blood by the brain, and conveyed from the brain by the nerves to every part of the body. Indeed this last opinion, however ingeniously illustrated, was absolutely untenable, as there was not only no evidence *for* it, but complete and decisive evidence *against* it.

Nor was even that opinion new, or peculiar to Dr Cullen: for it had been maintained by many ingenious, but fanciful theorists in physic, before his time. Of this every person interested in the question may be convinced at once, by consulting Dr Monro's great folio volume on the Nervous System, (page 77. to 87.) There they will find a brief enumeration of the decisive arguments which refute the opinion in question; and also an enumeration of no fewer than ten Medical Authors, prior to Dr Cullen, who had maintained that opinion. The name of Dr Cullen was suppressed in that enumeration, in which it ought naturally to have come the last, not from any disrespect to him, but, to my certain

certain knowledge, purely from considerations of respect and delicacy.

To such discussions and speculations, I conceive, that Dr Cullen alluded, by the metaphorical expression of a tub to amuse the whale. Whatever Mr John Bell may think of him, I think too highly of him, both in point of understanding and knowledge, to suppose that he could believe in doctrines, not only unsupported by evidence, but directly repugnant to it; or that he could suppose such fanciful theories of any importance, or any application to practice. His answer to my father, I believe, put an end to that conversation; and precluded all further attempts, on my father's part, to remonstrate with him on any doctrines that he might choose to teach: and I believe Dr Cullen took in good part that friendly hint, which my father gave him.

But a year or two afterwards an event occurred, relating to the same subject, which made Dr Cullen very angry, and gave my father some uneasiness.

In the *first* edition of the Edinburgh Encyclopædia Britannica, which, to the best of my remembrance, was published here in numbers, between thirty and five and thirty years ago, the article *Æther* made a conspicuous figure. In that article, the doctrine of the Nervous Æther, and the whole of Dr Cullen's doctrine of the Nervous System, were very roughly handled. This, without ever mentioning Dr Cullen's name, or alluding to him as the author or assertor of such doctrines, was done under pretence of discussing a certain Thesis, published in this University in 1768, on the cause of Animal Heat. In that Thesis (Gustavus Richard Brown's of Maryland, *De Ortu Animalium Caloris*) the production of animal heat, and many other curious things, are referred to the supposed Nervous Æther and its vibrations. It was well known to every Student of Physic at the University at that time, and indeed it is avowed by Dr Brown in the whole of his Thesis, from the motto on his title-page to the concluding sentence of his dissertation, (which sentence is quoted

in my former Memorial, page 210.), that it was the Theory on those subjects taught by Dr Cullen. It was one of his tubs to amuse the whale: and after it had served its purpose for some time, and was a little shattered in the service, he very wisely withdrew it, and threw out another and another, so as to keep the whale effectually amused, and always playing about him. But as he had not forgotten my father's hint on the subject, as soon as the severe discussion of the Nervous Æther appeared in the Encyclopædia, he immediately supposed that it was written by my father. So fully possessed was he with this notion, that he mentioned it without much reserve to some of his pupils, some of whom reported it to my father. I have heard that he mentioned his belief on that point to several other persons: I know he did so to Mr Creech, the bookfeller. Nay, as I have lately learned from the present Mr Smellie printer, Dr Cullen, in conversation with his father the late Mr William Smellie, one of the *Authors*, not the printer, of that edition of the Encyclopædia, told him that he was *sure* that my father had written that article, and that he knew his style.

This must have afforded much amusement to Mr Smellie, who was himself the author of that article; as my father soon learned from Mr Smellie: for he was so much piqued at Dr Cullen's unjust and ungenerous suspicion, that he spared no pains to discover the real author of that well written but severe article, which had given such offence, and been so rashly imputed to him. Mr Smellie, for good reasons, did not choose to be generally known as the author of it at that time; but I know that in the course of some years afterwards, Dr Cullen found him out, and was very angry at him accordingly. That discovery of Mr Smellie being the author of it, I have always understood, gave occasion to the complete alteration and softening of the article *Æther* in the second and all the subsequent editions of the Encyclopædia; so that nothing of it was allowed to remain that could give offence to Dr Cullen.

Mr John Bell deserves no small credit for his happy discovery, that Dr Cullen's ludicrous expression to my father was an acknowledgment, that the doctrine which he taught was all a cheat, and that I meant, by telling that story, to convey such a meaning, so inconsistent with truth, and so unworthy of Dr Cullen. His meaning plainly was, that while he endeavoured to instruct his pupils in the well established and useful facts and principles of physic, which are often dry and tedious, sometimes even disgusting, it was necessary to beguile and animate them on their weary way, by amusing them with more pleasing prospects, and engaging them in pursuits, which, by rousing them to active exertions, might quicken their progress in their toilsome journey; even while they seemed to withdraw them farthest from the common beaten track. If Dr Cullen erred in this notion, his error at least was not new in the world; and he might well have justified it by very high and ancient authority.

*Id quoque enim non ab nulla ratione videtur,
Sed veluti pueris absinthia tetra medentes
Cum dare conantur, prius oras pocula circum
Contingunt mellis dulci flavoque liquore,
Ut puerorum ætas improvida ludificetur
Laborum tenuis; interea perpotet amarum
Absinthii laticem, deceptaque non capiatur,
Sed potius tali facto recreata vale scat.*

If Mr John Bell and his clients shall not understand, or shall reject the authority of such a Heathenish writer as Lucretius, they must at least be supposed to understand, that there is nothing contrary either to Law or Gospel, in gilding a pill, or sweetening a nauseous draught; though neither the gold that covers the pill, nor the syrup that sweetens the draught, add any thing to the
virtues

virtues of the medicines which they contain. But the best proof of the justness of Dr Cullen's principle, and of his skill and success in applying it to practice, is the very high reputation which he soon acquired, and the number of his pupils who have risen to eminence in their profession, and who have contributed, by their active exertions, both to improve the practice of our art, and to extend the limits of our science.

Every Physician of sound unbiassed judgment, who is acquainted with the writings of Dr Cullen, must perceive and acknowledge, that his chief merit was not as a Theorist in Physic. He was indeed admirably acute and ingenious in detecting and exposing the errors and imperfections of the theories of other systematic Physicians; but he was not equally successful in establishing many of those theories, which he either formed for himself, or adopted from the great authors who had preceded him. The reason of his bad success in that respect is abundantly obvious; he was not sufficiently cautious as to the general facts or principles that he assumed, and too readily admitted, as his great predecessors had done, many vague and general hypotheses or conjectures, which neither are nor ever can be proved.

But in truth, the explaining and illustrating, or establishing, if they could be established, such speculations and conjectures, is but a small part, and certainly the least important part, of the duty of a Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic. Numberless interesting facts, with respect to the functions of the human body in health, with respect to the nature of diseases, and the mode of operation of remedies, are as well known as the circulation of the blood, and ought to be carefully distinguished from all such speculations and conjectures as are still subjects of doubt and dispute. Those certain and important facts it is the duty of the Professor to communicate to his pupils, and to shew the use and application of them, in explaining the symptoms, and in directing, as well as explaining,

explaining, the practice in various diseases. Facts so numerous and so various can scarce be communicated, or, if communicated, can scarce be remembered, and applied, where they are most wanted, without the help of some connecting medium, by which they are linked together and arranged. This is one great use of what is called Theory in Physic; that is, Hypothetical Theory. A true and well established theory, like that of gravitation in natural philosophy, would answer this important purpose infinitely better than theories altogether erroneous and fanciful. But few, even of the worst and most visionary of our medical theories, have been so bad, as not in some measure to serve the purpose of connecting and arranging many interesting facts. On this principle, I have long been convinced, that, not only in teaching and learning, but even in practising physic, a bad theory is better than none, provided only a Physician be not too strongly or blindly attached to it. It is of real importance to him, not only to have some principle to direct his practice, or some reason, good or bad, for what he does; but also to have in view some principle by which to arrange and remember his observations; something which he wishes either to establish or to refute. This will make his observations more accurate, as well as more useful, than otherwise they could be made by any effort of industry or genius.

Whatever may be thought of the justness of this opinion, at least it is not one assumed and professed, to serve a particular purpose on the present occasion. Any person whose curiosity shall lead him to look into my *Conspectus Medicinæ Theoreticæ*, published more than twenty years ago, will find the same opinion strongly expressed in the following words:

Præterea, non minima variarum quas Theoriæ Medicæ scriptores habuerunt opinionum utilitas fuit, res quas observando aut experiendo didicissent, et cum aliis communicare cuperent, quodammodo ordinare et in formam reducere, quæ aliter sparsæ, et confusæ, nulloque vinculo inter se

se connexæ, neque memoria retineri potuissent, neque ad arbitrium revocari aut seligi. Laxo vero et fragili vinculo uti præstabat quam nullo.

All this, however, about Medical Theories, and tubs to amuse the whale, like every thing else in this Memorial, is to be understood always with a *salvo jure* to Mr John Bell and his clients. If he, or they, or any of them, think they can establish as truths the various hypothetical opinions or theories with which Dr Cullen, in teaching first the Theory and afterwards the Practice of Physic, used to amuse his pupils, they are heartily welcome to set about it with all their might, *manibus pedibusque*. In his little book on the Institutions of Medicine, already quoted, nay even in that part of it which treats of the Nervous System, they will find more than enough to keep them busy for twice seven years to come; and, if they succeed in that great work, of which I can have no doubt, considering their talents, and the peculiar facility with which they discover numberless facts, that no other body ever dreamed of, and if I am alive at the end of that period, I shall point out to them, by way of another task, ten or a dozen paragraphs of Dr Cullen's First Lines of the Practice of Physic, to be by them established as matters of certain science: which I think will afford them abundant employment all their days, if they do not, one with another, live more than a hundred years.

In the mean time, and till I find some books better for my purpose, I shall beg leave to use, for the instruction of my pupils, Dr Cullen's Works, purely on account of the many valuable, well established, and well arranged facts, which they contain, with respect to the symptoms, the causes, and the cure of diseases; though I distrust his theories with respect to the manner in which those symptoms are produced, and the mode of operation of some of the remedies which he recommends. Those theories I consider as a kind of Apocrypha, allowed to remain between the Canonical books of the Old and those of the New Testament; which Apocrypha

crypha every student is well entitled to believe or to reject, according to the measure of his own understanding and faith. He may be an equally good Physician whether he believe it or not.

Relating to this, there is a curious allusion in Mr John Bell's Pamphlet, (Section 1. page 54.). " To know his (Dr Cullen's) " Theories, to repeat his Definitions, to profess to be the admirer " and defender of Cullen, has always been in this University the " *sole* and *sure* passport to Medical honours. Nor has this regimen " and academic discipline relaxed of late years; to these dogmas, true " or untrue, is every young man obliged to yield assent, " mouth, " honour, breath, which the poor heart would fain deny, but " *darè* not." In what light must this forced obedience appear, " now, when the doctrine is declared to be a tale! a very cheat?"

This is another illustrious specimen of Mr John Bell's superior genius, and of his cruel bad luck with respect to all matters of fact. It is indeed wonderful how he could ever think of such facts as these; the direct contrary of which might have been known, and almost demonstrated *a priori*; and has been amply experienced by many hundreds, and repeatedly published to the world. He and all his clients might have known, for it never was a secret, that in more than three and thirty years, that Dr Cullen taught as a Professor in the University of Edinburgh, there never was a time when *all* his Colleagues, Professors of Physic, or even the majority of them, taught, or admitted, those peculiar hypothetical theories of which he was the fondest; whether originally his own, or adopted by him from *Hoffman*, *Stahl*, and others, is of no moment at present. To the best of my knowledge and belief, there never was a time when even *one* of his Colleagues admitted those theories; nor do I believe they ever were admitted by the other Physicians, Fellows of the Royal College in this City, who had not been his pupils, or by any great number of Physicians, if by any, in the three kingdoms, who were his seniors

or cotemporaries, and not his pupils. And I had good occasion to observe, between fourteen and nine and twenty years ago, that in London his doctrine, which Mr John Bell says had enslaved the Medical world, was treated with great contempt.

To me it appears incredible and absurd, if not literally impossible, that his Colleagues, four or five in number, should have concurred in imposing *forcibly* on their pupils, a faith, or profession of faith in Medical opinions, which they themselves neither entertained nor professed. Supposing them to have had but common sense, and any, the smallest, notion of what science is, which may fairly be presumed of them all, till we have evidence of the contrary, it cannot be believed that they would exact from their pupils such professions of belief, even in those opinions which they themselves thought most probable.

They surely must have known the infinite difference between opinions, however plausible, and matters of science, fairly ascertained, by observation and experiment, and strict induction from these.

In point of fact I may state with confidence, that in the course of six and twenty years, I have assisted at more than a thousand examinations of Students, who were candidates for the degree of Doctor of Physic in this University, and that I never saw nor heard of any such irrational, illiberal conduct on the part of the Professors who examined them.

Our examinations do not turn on points of opinion, or theory, or controversy; and when, incidentally, any questions are put relating to such points, it has always been understood among us, that a Student was entitled to judge and choose for himself. We are always pleased when a Student shows by his answers, as many of them do perfectly well, that he is acquainted with the different opinions that have prevailed on such points; and with the arguments that have been urged for and against them respectively. If
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any Student chose to adopt the hypothetical opinions of Dr Cullen, we had no right, and could have no inclination, to judge unfavourably of him on that account.

If a Student, when desired to describe the principal and distinguishing symptoms of a disease, answer us in the words of Dr Cullen, by giving us the definition of the disease as stated by him in his *Methodical Nosology*, we have good reason to be well satisfied with his answer: but we are still better satisfied, when a Student describes a disease by enumerating its distinguishing symptoms in his own words, though perhaps less accurate and scientific than those of Dr Cullen. In either case, we must presume that such a Student has learned enough to know such a disease when he meets with it, and to distinguish it from all others. This is the chief use of *Methodical Nosology* and its definitions. Whenever we find a Student repeating fluently and accurately the words of such definitions, and yet hesitating in his answers to other questions, we are apt to suspect that he has got the definitions by rote, as part of his *catechism*, perhaps without understanding them: and we take care to ascertain that point, by a little cross questioning; just as when we find a Student giving an imperfect definition or description of a disease, we discover, by putting further questions to him, whether he really knows all the important symptoms of that disease or not.

I think it probable that some Students have obtained the degree of Doctor of Physic in this University during Dr Cullen's incumbency, without ever attending his lectures, or knowing his doctrines, as I know that some have done without ever attending mine. At any rate, there was nothing to hinder them to do so; for our laws, which are made as generally known as possible, do not require of our Students that, in order to be admitted to examination for the degree of Doctor of Physic, they shall attend the lectures of *every* Professor of Physic in *this* University, but only, that

they shall attend the lectures of Professors on the several branches of Physic, in this or some other University.

It was the object of the Professors of Physic, and of the Senatus Academicus of this University, in framing those laws, to act in the most liberal manner, by putting attendance on the lectures of Professors, or teachers by public authority, in other Universities, on the same footing with attendance on their own lectures.

Lastly, In direct opposition to Mr John Bell's most splendid fact, there are extant many inaugural dissertations, published in this University during the last twenty years of Dr Cullen's incumbency, that contain the strongest possible assertions of doctrines very different from his, and many severe strictures on the doctrines which he taught. It would be indelicate, or something worse, perhaps seriously injurious, to the authors of those dissertations, were I, in such a Memorial as this, to mention their names, and quote particular passages from their dissertations, in proof and illustration of what I have here stated; for I know that some, and strongly suspect that many of them, have lived long enough to perceive the errors of many doctrines which they had at one time most confidently asserted, and even to be ashamed of what they had written. But every person, who has any curiosity on the subject, may satisfy it at once, by looking into some of the many Theses published in this University between the years 1778 and 1790, and containing either quotations from *Brunonis Elementa*, or marginal references to that work. Mr John Bell's felicity, in his mode of vindicating Dr Cullen, and in the many new and marvellous facts which he has discovered for that purpose, is indeed most admirable. Let us suppose for once, what it is *impossible* to believe; that Dr Cullen wished to enforce the admission, and professed belief, of all his doctrines, among his pupils, by those arbitrary proceedings, and that kind of persecution which Mr John Bell has stated in the paragraph just now quoted from his Pamphlet;

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let us suppose farther, that all his colleagues had the folly and turpitude to concur with him in those unworthy measures ; let us consider what the necessary consequence *must* have been, both with respect to himself and his pupils. Such conduct on his part, and the motives of it, must have become soon and generally known, and must have rendered him infamous. With respect to his pupils, far from making them converts to his doctrine, and eager assertors of it, it must have made them its greatest opposers ; and Dr Cullen, instead of being the favourite and idol of his pupils, must have been the object of their contempt and abhorrence. Such, unquestionably, is human nature ; at least in all who feel the liberal spirit of truth and candour, and follow with enthusiasm the pursuits of science, ever jealous and impatient of authority, and indignant at the thought of restraint or oppression.

From Mr John Bell's pretended vindication of Dr Cullen, which seems to have been intended seriously, not as a piece of sarcasm and irony, and from the approbation that it has met with from his friends and clients, it appears indisputably, that there are men, and these too professing great regard to science, to virtue, to liberality of sentiment and conduct, who would not have been shocked or disgusted by such illiberal conduct in Dr Cullen, and in spite of it, would have regarded him as well entitled to the esteem and admiration of mankind. If each of them had put a clear window in his breast, he could not have shown us more plainly his own sentiments, his own character, and his own notions of science.

The whole of that vindication is so complete and original, and characteristic of its author, that it is needless to discuss it more fully : but as an explanation of what I have hinted, that it was *impossible* to believe such things of Dr Cullen, I must mention what Mr John Bell and his clients seem totally to have overlooked, that Dr Cullen stated *all* his hypothetical theories with great modesty, and many expressions

sions of doubt and diffidence, and many strong acknowledgments of their imperfections. If Mr John Bell and his clients had read his works with attention, they must have perceived this, and have been struck with it: and if they had read the writings of any other systematic Physician or Theorist, from Galen to Boerhaave inclusive, they must have seen, that those systematic authors were not equally cautious and modest, but generally inculcated their doctrines with perfect confidence, as well-established truths, and sometimes maintained them with most dogmatical arrogance and insolence; just as some modern writers in Physic and Surgery assert their own dogmas, and revile their opponents. That candour and modesty which Dr Cullen displayed in his systematical writings, both with respect to the sufficiency of his theories, and the efficacy of the medicines and practice that he recommended, was an excellent lesson to his pupils, and certainly contributed much to recommend both himself and his doctrines to them: but it evidently precluded, and rendered *impossible*, even if he had been disposed to try it, which I am sure was not the case, any attempt to cram his doctrine down their throats. Mr John Bell and all his clients must be deplorably ignorant of human nature, if they do not know that man is the most perverse of all animals; and they must be ignorant even of the common principles of animal nature, if they do not know what effect such tyranny has on the most gentle and docile of quadrupeds, and withal the most affectionately attached to his master. A dog, who is passionately fond of his bone, and will fight stoutly for it, when allowed to choose and pick it for himself, as soon as it is tied fast to his tail, hates it, and the person who tied it, worse than poison; and barks, and howls, and runs away as if the devil were at his heels.

It is delightful to observe how Mr John Bell's style rises with his subject, and how his warmth increases with its warmth. His animadversions on what I have said of the prevalence of professional disputes and party-spirit in that Royal College which has the honour to boast of him as a Fellow, display a degree of eloquence and fire, worthy of that Society, and that cause which he defends, and far superior to any thing contained in the preceding part of his Pamphlet. To quote here the whole of those animadversions, though delightful, would be somewhat superfluous, as a small sample may well suffice. " You are now, for the first time, informed, that there are two parties among the Surgeons in this city. Why are you told this? Is it your concern? Parties in philosophy, in politics, in professions, in religion, and also in morals, are not disavowed; but in the universal sentiment of philanthropy and charity, in that feeling without which a man is degraded from his nature! who before your Memorialist, has dared to say, that there are parties?

" Who but your Memorialist would dare to say, that a Surgeon, if any disastrous event should befall him, requiring surgical assistance and a capital operation, would (if he were forced to receive that assistance from some of his professional brethren) give himself up for lost?" (*Answer, Sect. 3. p. 9.*)

First, As to the latter part of this splendid passage, I need only say, that I have heard of one remarkable instance of a Surgeon, a Fellow of the Royal College of this city, actually performing on himself a pretty severe operation; which implied, that he either could not, or would not, trust any of his professional brethren to do it. And I have heard some Members of that Royal College speak of several, even of the most eminent of their brethren, in such bitter terms of contempt and reproach, for their ignorance, unskilfulness, and negligence, that I am sure they would not have trusted their own persons in such unworthy and dangerous hands.

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But I never said nor thought generally, that a Surgeon, in the sense of every Surgeon in Edinburgh, would give himself up for lost, if he were forced to receive professional assistance from any one of his brethren; which is the meaning that Mr John Bell's words convey. But that being a matter of fact, his usual bad luck attended him in stating it, even though he had it in his power to transcribe my very words.

Further, From the opinions which some Surgeons have expressed openly, either by word of mouth, or by writing, or both ways; and the disapprobation, not to say contempt and reproach, that they have expressed for the mode of proceeding of some of their brethren in various parts of chirurgical practice, it is impossible to doubt that they would think themselves exposed to peculiar danger, if they were obliged to receive chirurgical assistance from such men. But to cut that matter short, Mr John Bell, if he pleases, may declare publicly, whether, if he had occasion to be cut for the stone, or to undergo the operation for the radical cure of the Hydrocele, he would or would not think himself exposed to peculiar danger, if his dear friend and namesake Mr Benjamin Bell were to be the operator, and were to perform either of these operations in the way that he recommends in his Book on Surgery, and has been accustomed to perform them with success.— But this is a point of no moment, in comparison of the great object to which he has irresistibly called our attention.

In no part of his Answer has Mr John Bell come so near to giving me a little credit for some distant approach to veracity, as in the following. (*Sett.* 3. *p.* 10.) “ If he inform you there are “ *two* parties, you may be assured there is *one*.” It is plain, that when he penned this sentence, he must have had in view the vulgar maxim, that people should not believe more than one half of what the world says; as in the common cases, of a young lady said to have lain in privately of twins, or of a gentleman said to have

have been twice detected cheating at cards, and twice using loaded dice.

The fact that there prevailed in the College of Surgeons a most rancorous spirit of party, being publicly notorious, could not be denied. It therefore was his business to make the *best*, that is, to make the *least* possible of it. To this urgent necessity, which has always been found the mother of invention, and to his happy remembrance and ingenious application of a trite vulgar maxim, we owe the noble discovery, that the Royal College of Surgeons may be divided into *one*, and this one a most inveterate party. As this discovery was not made in Ireland, it cannot be called a *bull*; but it is a good *imperialism*, and one of the finest examples I have ever seen of what may be done by superior genius. Any ordinary person, nay, even our Professors of Logic and of Mathematics, would be apt to say, If there be *one* party, you may be assured that there are at least *two* parties, perhaps more. Indeed, I suspect both those learned Professors will be much alarmed, and disposed to give themselves and their sciences over for lost, when they hear of this portentous discovery. For if any whole may be divided into *one* part, which when the whole consist of a number of persons is called a *party*, so may every whole, or any quantity be; such as a line, a surface, or a solid; a cheese, or a landed estate. Then such a part or party, as there is no other part of the whole, must either be the whole, or at least *bona fide* equal to the whole. Then this *one* party of the Royal Collège, having no other party to clapperclaw and to revile in print, and yet being unable to abstain from such exercises, must either have been clapperclawing and reviling itself without mercy, or clapperclawing and reviling nobody at all. Nay more, that party, individually and collectively, has been engaged in divers most inveterate law-suits, and has been prosecuted for very heavy damages: that is, it has either gone to law with itself, and prosecuted itself for heavy damages,

on account of gross, opprobrious, insufferable wrongs, done by itself, to itself; or it has been embroiled in law-suits, and prosecuted for swinging damages, by certain Non-Entities, pretending to be members of a party that they know does not exist, any more than they do themselves; though they are unquestionably Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, and no Members of that party of it which they are prosecuting for various wrongs done to them. Two of these Non-Entities have had the unparalleled presumption to prosecute the one and only party in their College, for depriving them of certain rights which the said Non-Entities pretended to have as Members of the College. Another of those Non-Entities has carried the joke still farther, by pretending to have been the President of their College, and to have been turned out of his Chair of Office, and censured publicly, in very harsh terms, by a party to which he did not belong, and which he has since prosecuted in a Court of Justice, laying his damages at L. 1000. Never was a Court of Justice in this world so bamboozled. If every Judge in it had got to his own share the whole brains of Aristotle undivided, still the puzzle would have been inextricable and hopeless: a law-suit, or still worse, many law-suits, carried on with the greatest inveteracy, and only one party in them all, must always be to Judges as great a stumbling-block as a part equal to the whole generally proves to Mathematicians.— Compared to this, the ingenious *quizzing* of My Lord President was but a school-boy's trick, and plainly the work of a much inferior genius. The joke consisted in making him believe, that he was a Party and not a Judge, or at least doubt which he was, the very day that the cause between the College of Surgeons and the Managers of the Infirmary came before the Court; and was perpetrated by giving him notice, (falsely), just before he took his seat on the Bench, that he had the day before been elected a Manager of the Royal Infirmary. It was supposed, with much probability,

bability, that the very little reverence which, on some preliminary point of the cause, his Lordship had expressed for the pretended contract of 1738, suggested that curious expedient to set him aside as a Judge. But the chief merit of it was, that it went so very near to that nice and dangerous figure of logic, called *Bocardo*; which the best logicians of Oxford have always dreaded, it being so easy to get into it, and so difficult to get out of it. This will be found well explained in the Classical Dictionary. See *Quod*.

That figure of rhetoric, the interrogation, of which Mr John Bell has so nobly availed himself, has always been regarded as the most animated and forcible apostrophe. The doctrine of Longinus on this subject, and the striking examples of it in the orations of Demosthenes, must no doubt have been fresh in his memory, when he penned those admirable questions which I have quoted from his Answer to me. Such questions too have many advantages, which Longinus has not pointed out, but which Mr John Bell seems to have understood perfectly. A question can neither be contradicted nor refuted; for, unlike a proposition, it can neither be true nor false, and yet it may convey, more strongly than any proposition can do, the same important meaning; for example, "Who, before your Memorialist has dared to say that there are parties?" The meaning conveyed by this question is essentially the same with, No man before your Memorialist has dared to say, that there are parties among the Surgeons of Edinburgh, and all that he has said about them is false, and a mere fiction of his own. He is, I believe, right in saying, You (the Managers) are now for the first time informed, that there are parties among the Surgeons of this City; if, by this, he means that it is the first time that the Managers have been told of it in a printed Memorial addressed to them. But if he means by it, that the Managers never before knew or heard that there were parties among the Surgeons, nay, violent and inveterate parties among

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them, he is as completely mistaken as he has been with respect to any of the facts which he has most confidently asserted in the regular form of proposition.

In proof of this I need only state, that two of the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons always are Managers of the Royal Infirmary, and by its Charter must be so. To this I may add, that the inveterate spirit of party which prevails among the Surgeons, has been so fully displayed in word and deed, in writing and printing, that no Manager of the Infirmary, who took a heartfelt interest in the welfare of the Hospital, could be supposed ignorant of it, or indifferent to it.

As to his questions, Why are you told this? Is it your concern? I answer briefly, that it was told them by me, because it was very much their concern; and that it was told them publicly, in a printed Memorial, very generally distributed, because it is the concern of the public, and chiefly of the sick poor, for whom the Managers are but Trustees. It was fit that the public should know, what the Managers had long known and lamented; what they had at first endeavoured, but in vain, to prevent; and what they had repeatedly endeavoured, but equally in vain, to rectify. It was fit that the public should know, at least in general, for I carefully avoided mentioning particulars, the chief of the many strong reasons that the Managers had, for making a decisive effort to get rid of an evil, which had long been great, and was daily increasing. It was not on account of occasional differences in opinion, or accidental personal quarrels, or professional rivalry among some individuals Members of the Royal College of Surgeons, that the attention of the Managers, and of the public, was called on the present occasion to their inveterate warfare; but on account of that rancorous spirit of party, and that implacable animosity which prevailed among them, and rendered the consulting-room a scene of endless wrangling, and the operation-room a scene
of

of the most malignant criticism; which often frustrated the benevolent purpose for which the Hospital was established, and had actually driven from the duties of it some of the most respectable Surgeons who had ever practised in this city.

As to "that universal sentiment of philanthropy and charity," in that feeling, without which a man is degraded from his nature!" which Mr John Bell so boldly thrusts in our faces, the best commentary on it, and the best explanation of its real nature and value, will be found in the unanimous resolution of the Royal College of Surgeons, 9th of August 1784; in which it stands on record, that they would not give the Managers an opportunity of making alterations, however good for the Hospital, that is, for the sick poor in it, which would not be for the benefit of the Royal College.

Though peculiarly ill qualified for the task, I shall endeavour to convey to the Managers and the public, some notion of that state of inveterate warfare, which, from the uniformly concurrent testimony of many competent witnesses, I have long understood to prevail among the Surgeons. That I may do no injustice to any individual, or any party of them; or be supposed to impute to the present Members of their College, the sentiments and actions of their predecessors more than twenty years ago, I shall divide the short time of their eternal war, which I have had occasion to hear of, into three different periods. The first of these extends from the time when I first had occasion to hear of it, that is, from the time when I settled as a Physician in Edinburgh, about seven and twenty years ago, to the time when Mr John Bell became a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons; it being expressly declared that he, and his Junior Brethren, can have no share either in the merit or demerit of any thing said or done during that first period; and it being understood that they may, if they please, be thought ignorant of all that passed during that time. The second period extends

tends from the day when Mr John Bell became a Fellow of that Royal College, to the day when my former Memorial was distributed.—It will not, I hope, be thought either unreasonable or uncandid, to suppose, that he, and many of his Junior Brethren, know at least the general tenor and spirit of the transactions of their own College during their own time; and even that they are well acquainted with many particular facts and circumstances, whether they had any concern in them or not.—The third period extends from the time when my former Memorial was distributed to the present hour. This eventful period might well afford materials for many volumes, as in fact it has already done, for many volumes of law-papers, which may almost be said to be written and printed in letters of gold; that is, in letters which have cost much gold. But, as the most important events in this last period are already well known to the Managers and the Public, it is unnecessary for me to enlarge on them; especially as Jonathan Dawplucker, Esq; yet lives, a prosperous gentleman, and I trust will think the subject not unworthy of his pen.

As to the first of those periods, I can testify in general, that from the time I settled in Edinburgh, I heard so much, and so often, of their disputes and their brawls, both in their consultations in the Infirmary, and at their convivial meetings, both of the College as a body, and of clubs, consisting chiefly of members of the College, that I resolved peremptorily never to be a member of any of those clubs, nor even a visitor at any of their meetings. From what I heard of them, I should have thought them most unpleasant meetings; and I could not have been a member of any of their societies without siding with one party or other, which I was resolved never to do, considering it as both irrational and illiberal. I was always at pains to avoid being informed of the nature of their disputes and parties, or even of the subjects of their altercations: but I could not avoid hearing sometimes of ve-

ry disgraceful brawls which took place among them. Some of these were described in such lively and ludicrous terms, and with so many strange circumstances, that it was impossible not to suspect some degree of fancy and exaggeration in the account that was given of them; but I scarce think there could have been such fanciful and exaggerated accounts without some foundation: and I must say, that one of the most marvellous of those adventures, something like the confusion of King Agramant's Camp, or the battle royal in Don Quixote's enchanted inn, was described to me minutely, in the house, and in the presence of a most respectable Fellow of that Royal College, who did not dispute the accuracy of any part of the description, and contented himself with declaring, very dryly, that he had been long a Member of it, and yet had never given or received one blow at any of its meetings. But that this was not the case universally with all its Members, was perfectly well known. I remember to have heard of one memorable skirmish, *parole* swimming, which afforded much amusement to the scoffers. I remember to have heard, from an eyewitness, a minute account of a by-battle, at an accidental meeting in a private house, between two Fellows of the College, one of whom, having caught a Tartar, was pommelled in a very masterly style. I have heard, from equally good authority, that at the supper given to the Royal College by the present worthy President when he was admitted a Fellow of it, which must have been near twenty years ago, some of the Honourable Members were at blows before the table-cloth was removed; which was thought somewhat extraordinary. As to the number of flaps on the face, kicks on the breech, broken heads, black eyes, bloody noses, pegs on the stomach, croses buttocks, and chucks under the chin, which were given and received on that or any other of their grand field days, I never could obtain particular information: but no doubt it must have been very considerable. It is much to be lamented,

lamented, that no exact record of their practice in that respect was ever kept, as was very properly done of the practice of the volunteer companies of artillery on their grand days of exercise. Such a record, faithfully kept, would have been most edifying and instructive reading; especially to their successors, even to time's end. *Majorum gloria posteris lumen est.* And certainly it would have been very delightful reading to all literate persons, even though not disposed nor required to follow the illustrious example. Either Fielding, or the divine Plato, who was himself a bruiser, or some other equally great Philosopher, has justly observed, that such things are far pleasanter to read of than to feel. I know that the late Dr John Hope was prevailed on to become a Member of one of their clubs; and that he soon found it too hot for him. I know that Dr Hope was so shocked and disgusted with their mode of wrangling in the consultation-room of the Infirmary, that he came to a right understanding with the Surgeon's clerk, and from him got intelligence whenever there was to be a consultation, and took care to be out of the way in due time. But as a complete specimen of the spirit which prevailed among them, even in the consulting room of the Infirmary, it is sufficient to mention one fact, which certainly will not be disputed, as it must still be fresh in the memory of many eyewitnesses. In the course of one of their altercations, one of them behaved in such a manner, that another, provoked at his insufferable insolence, seized him by the throat, and put him in the fire: I mean his better end, his nobler part, his seat of honour; for the grate was not large enough to receive his whole person. So the offender got off, *minus* one pair of breeches, and perhaps some portion of leather, which it may be presumed would grow again. According to my information, there was not one Member of the College, unless perhaps the patient himself, who did not highly approve of that vigorous application of the actual cautery to his tail;

tail; or rather of his tail to the actual cautery. That kind of practice, though somewhat uncommon now-a-days, is fully justified by our best established medical axioms; one of which is expressed by Boerhaave in the following words, *In maximis malis semel et cito tentanda summa remedia.* Another of them is the well-known aphorism of Hippocrates, *Quæcunque non sanant medicamenta, ea ferrum sanat; quæ ferrum non sanat, ea ignis sanat; quæ ignis non sanat, ea incurabilia putare oportet.* 8. 6.

It is unnecessary to produce any more proofs and examples of that rancorous and inveterate warfare which prevailed in the Royal College of Surgeons, even within the walls of this Hospital, between sixteen and seven and twenty years ago. The authenticity of the examples given, will not, I presume, be disputed either by Mr John Bell or by any of his Clients, who probably will be more inclined to exult in them; and at least are well entitled to say, that they have no more to do with those disgraceful brawls, than with the biting and kicking among the unclean beasts in Noah's Ark; as all these things passed before their time.

It is a more nice and difficult matter, to give proper examples and proofs of the rancorous spirit of party that has prevailed among them in the second period; that is, from the time that Mr John Bell became a member of the College, till summer 1800, when my unlucky Memorial came forth: for not only any general account that I might give of it, but every particular instance that I could mention, however accurately stated, and however well authenticated to me, might be made the subject of endless dispute and altercation; and would even involve, what I should be sorry to see involved in this discussion, the personal and professional character, that is, the fame and fortune, of many individuals among them. This consideration has such weight with me, that, rather than run the risk of doing so great an evil, I believe I should have contented myself with the general reference in my former

Memorial, to the works of the formidable Jonathan Dawplucker, Esquire.

But luckily I am possessed of a most precious document, which was in my hands at the time I was writing my former Memorial, and which at that time I suppressed, from considerations of delicacy; which Mr John Bell and his clients have had the goodness completely to remove. The document to which I allude is so complete and admirable, and so well suited for my purpose, that it looks as if it had been expressly made for it. It is in print, and has been so for about four years and a half; that is, for more than two years before my Memorial appeared: it was distributed among all the members of the College of Surgeons, and must have been read and well known by all of them, and by many hundreds of others; it is anonymous, and the name of no individual of their College is mentioned in it; it does not even appear, from a perusal of it, what particular transaction among them gave occasion to such a bitter Philippick; it is written with a degree of fire and eloquence, little, if at all, inferior to that of some of the writings of Jonathan Dawplucker himself; though subscribed only A FELLOW MEMBER, it is not on this account the less authentic, for the author of it is better known even than Jonathan Dawplucker. I am not entitled to mention his name; but the Managers and the public may be assured, that I should never offer such an indignity to Mr John Bell and his Clients, as to quote in opposition to their strong insinuations, even against my own veracity, the writings of an obscure or contemptible author. It is a vulgar but a very just observation, that comparisons are odious; else I should certainly attempt to draw some kind of comparison or parallel, in the manner of Plutarch, between this very eloquent and indignant fellow member, and Mr John Bell, and Jonathan Dawplucker, Esquire.

It is proper however to mention, that the Fellow Member is highly respected and esteemed for his talents, his veracity, and his probity: I mean that he is so by one party in the Royal College; the other party, no doubt, which happened to be the majority when his letter was written, would be very glad to see his skeleton. This of course he would take for granted, when he was writing and printing his letter. Yet it must not be thought that his letter expresses the sentiments of only one individual of their number; for there is ample evidence, both positive and negative, that other fellow members approved of his sentiments, and his publication of them. In the first place, negatively; he was not put in a strait waistcoat on account of his printed letter; nor was he prosecuted for scandal and defamation on account of the many atrocious charges of infamous conduct which he brought against his brethren; he was not kicked down stairs, or thrown out at the window, for what he had printed: he was not even sent to Coventry, as it is called, by any resolution of his brethren not to speak to him. These negative considerations, in the judgment of every candid person, must imply, that there was much truth in what he had said. But, in addition to them, we have the positive circumstances, that he has been highly esteemed and respected by many of his brethren, indeed by one whole party of them, who have given him repeatedly the most ample, public, and honourable testimonials of their favourable sentiments. I scarce think Mr John Bell himself has much more to boast of in that respect than the nameless Fellow Member.

One glaring inconsistency and contradiction between his letter and Mr John Bell's Answer to me, cannot fail to strike even the most careless reader: for while the latter represents his brethren, individually and collectively, as every thing that is great and good in their own profession, and in human nature, the former represents them as every thing that is vile, detestable, and infamous.

Such contradictions cannot be reconciled ; but, in the present instance, I believe, they may be accounted for. The Fellow Member, in his printed letter, expressed his genuine indignant sentiments, without restraint, reserve, or disguise : whereas Mr John Bell, acting in the character of an Advocate, was obliged to express those sentiments, however repugnant to his own, which might serve the purpose of his clients. I have a strong suspicion, that Mr John Bell's sentiments, with respect to his brethren, are not essentially different from those expressed by the Fellow Member : and it is certain at least, that neither the publication of the Fellow Member's Letter, nor that of Mr John Bell's Answer to me, has produced any perceptible coolness in those warm sentiments of esteem, admiration, and affection which they always have testified for one another. If there be any points on which Mr John Bell thinks the Fellow Member has either said the things which are not, or done any injustice to his brethren, it will be easy for him to point them out, in a manner the most delicate, and best suited to their long and tender friendship. This I hope he will have the goodness to do, as it will give unspeakable comfort to all concerned, and to no body more than to myself.

As the indignant Fellow Member's private Letter, which, for the sake of greater privacy, was printed, distributed, and handed about all over the town, is not only completely adapted to my purpose on the present occasion, but is really a splendid and valuable production of superior genius, and now become very scarce ; I am sure it will be very gratifying to the Royal College of Surgeons, to the Managers of the Infirmary, and to the public in general, to see it reprinted *verbatim* in this Memorial. For this good purpose, I have put into the hands of Mess. Murray and Cochrane a fair clean copy of it, with the most pointed directions to reprint it faithfully : so, if there be any deviation from the original, they, not I, must answer for it : and if the indignant Fellow Member finds

finds any such error in it, were it but the omitting or misplacing of a single point of admiration, he has my hearty consent to seize the said Mess. Murray and Cochrane, with their compositors and pressmen, and their Devil to boot, and put them all to the *peine forte et dure* in their own printing presses, *in terrorem*, and for the benefit of all future printers. The only liberty that I have presumed to take with that most precious and original document, is the affixing of a few arithmetical numbers to the margin of it, for the sake of precise and easy reference to certain luminous passages, which I wish to be considered in their full relation with the context, rather than to be exhibited and criticised in the form of detached quotations or extracts.

A PRIVATE LETTER, addressed to the GENTLEMEN of the ROYAL COLLEGE of SURGEONS, by a FELLOW MEMBER. Edinburgh, July 9. 1798.

The request, in answer to which the following short note was written, is one of the many motives for calling the attention of the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons to the present condition of that Society, the Elections, Offices, Business, and Duties of it.

S I R,

HAVING first received a letter from you, requesting my vote to make you President of the Royal College of Surgeons, you afterwards, in the streets, forced me into a conversation, which was, to say the least of it, unnecessary. On my part, that conversation consisted chiefly of one question, viz. Whether you yourself had not promised to vote for Mr. ———? You said you had; and your
resolution

resolution of keeping your word gives me such a singular opinion of your honour and good sense, that I cannot but vote along with you.—I am, Your most obedient servant,

S I R,

THE constitution of the Royal College of Surgeons gives to every Member high privileges in speaking his sentiments among his fellow Members ; but this is a dead law. The business is usually so formed by the official Members, that no man feels any peculiar call to do his duty ; and his opinion degenerates into a silent vote, or unavailing protest. He is not encouraged to speak his opinions ; he is indifferent about business ; which can do no honour nor service to the Society ;—its concerns roll on in one undistinguished routine ; many Gentlemen have not condescended to appear at its meetings for years ; and now, to the utter shame and disgrace of the College, no one public duty occupies their thoughts, till that

(1) season returns in which some single Member is to push his way into the Council Chamber, for purposes which it were best, even among ourselves, to leave unexplained.

When a Member of the College feels these things as he should do, it is his privilege, and his bounden duty, to speak his sentiments in that form in which he thinks they will be most effectual ; but he should endeavour to do it with tenderness towards others, and under that restraint which becomes an individual Member, addressing himself to a public body, and to the Members of a public body. The person who now addresses you, feels that he acts honestly ; protests himself purged of malice, free and honourable in his motives ; with no little-minded private resentment lurking about him ; but with an honest and growing indignation

(2) at a public abuse which has been increasing upon us for years, and now knows no bounds.

It

It is the fate of every public body to struggle, first for existence, then for privileges, for honours, last of all, when in the end, it falls, like the natural body, into slow decay. Our College has been much honoured, and often ;—it has had large privileges, renewed from time to time ;—it was once a learned body, and published those essays which have been so much admired abroad ;—it was then struggling for the highest privileges, and obtained them, and was elected into a Royal College ;—but at the present time, though it has those privileges entire within it, like the spirit of life, yet it hardly lives, but merely exists. (3)

A long narration of this would ill suit the present purpose. The appeal is to those who, being integral parts of this general body, feel, or need to feel, all the meanness of their situation: and, ungracious as the task may be, I wish to prove to you, and all my fellow Members, how shamefully low this College has fallen; for this evil, if fully and generally felt, could not be long endured. (4) (5)

We feel nothing interesting or honourable in the business of this College, in the character which it confers on its Members, in the privileges which they enjoy, or in the use which is made of those privileges. To be a Member of so old an institution, so highly chartered—so respectable by its privileges, should be an honour; but it is so fallen in reputation, that, bating the right of practising in this city, there is no one privilege which a sensible man would value. The money, time, and services, by which those privileges are procured, are a mere squandering of the best years of life. (6) (7)

This College, to which we belong, would very ill bear to be compared with the Great Schools of other Countries. Its name is not known abroad; or, if it is so, it is only by being confounded with the University; for what stranger could think that it were not a literary body, as our profession is a learned one. Its examinings, and its five guinea diplomas, are matter of trivial form: as official passports, they have but limited effect. They have (8)

have no currency—no respectability ;—they are of no authority nor value ;—they are accessible to all those who cannot procure
 (9) degrees, and are then their only refuge to satisfy their friends, like the parchments of private societies. —Who cares for our diploma ?—

The business of the College cannot interest a rational man, who is entering into life with serious thoughts. Its laws relate to fines and meetings—the distributing of worthless diplomas—the exami-
 (10) ning of the most ignorant young men, of whom no regular qualifications are required ;—to the election of a Deacon, who goes to the Town Council but to be neglected ; who, if he were truly chosen for his proper office, of Presiding over a Royal College, over a society of men bred up to science, and thinking of their profession alone, would feel himself but little connected with the Town Council, and not at all with politics ; would go there seldom ; and would be accordingly honoured. The business of the College is
 (11) not passively despised, it is detested ;—the place is forsaken ;—its business is abandoned to those few who need to hunt for some little office, or who have to run backwards and forwards, at the call of the whipper-in, and yelp in order to turn the game.—Who besides minds the business to this Royal College ?—Is this a fit or decent thing for men who belong to a serious profession, and a learned one ?

The offices of the College of Surgeons are such as bring no honour. They are considered only as the means of procuring other offices out of the profession—less honourable, but gainful ; and yet it is strange that such mean offices should be sought after in this way :—for these offices must be filled up ; without these sneaking methods, each office must be given to some one ; and it is only the intense desire to procure them that hurries us into needless
 (12) baseness. But yet this is the pitiful motive for which an office, that of President of the College of Surgeons, which should be honourable,

nourable, has been long disgraced; and now, more than ever. Did no man propose himself for this office but with manly and respectful notions of what the College of Surgeons should be, and with a due sense of the value of his fellow Members, and of the dignity of the station to which he aspired. Those high thoughts would make him worthy of the honour. But are those, indeed, the motives? It were cruel to say of any individual that he did not solicit the office with such honourable intentions, or were not fit for its duties;—but if the Members of the Royal College of Surgeons had that respect for themselves, and for each other, which they should have, no one would dare to offer himself who were not, in some degree, worthy. It were surely requiring no hard thing of every right minded man, that, laying his hand on his heart, he should say, I believe the man for whom I vote to be worthy of this office;—I do not vote for him in consideration of his private interests, or peculiar situation;—I support him with no other thought than that he is to busy himself in the interest and honour of this College, and in that alone. Do we now acknowledge that this would be honourable, strictly honourable? and yet it is not done!!!

Once we had a College, and Presidents—and business, interesting to every Member. Our College was associated with physicians, for the purpose of publishing books of Science. Then character was equally divided in this commonwealth of knowledge, and the name of Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, and especially the title of President, was honourable abroad; and, what is more difficult, more interesting, was respected at home.—But now that collection of observation, which once was a chief business of the College, is neglected;—and though this work of our forefathers has been infinitely approved of—which it is a lasting benefit to our profession, and an honour to the College to which we belong, is a reproach to us.—Do our present Members think

so meanly of themselves?—or are they insensible to such duties, and to such honours?

There is no public business, nor any motive for assembling in the Hall. There is no private harmony—no means of cultivating
 (13) a good understanding one with another; but we feel as if some spirit were working among us to divide us into absurd parties, without apology or motive, or with such motives only as a sensible man would blush to own.

There was indeed a time when every social meeting, was ac-
 (14) companied with those loathsome excesses which could not long have been endured, which are, in our profession, particularly disgraceful. But those disorders had absolutely ceased, when they
 (15) were made an awkward pretence for abolishing every public meeting;—yet those who proposed that such social meetings should be dissolved, were by no means remarkable for their chasteness of conduct, nor the most backward at those seasons of revelry and riot; nor the most earnest for moral reform. The true reason lies
 (16) much deeper than this. Those shameful excesses had well nigh ceased. The College meetings were subsiding into a more gentleman-like form; points of professional knowledge were assuming the place of political cabals. Young men were daily admitted;—it seemed possible that the Society might change its complexion altogether, and reform from other follies than the pardonable levities of any occasional debauch;—it looked as if the Members were amalgamating and running together into some new shape. The general Society began to be weary of those politics, and of that eternal irritation, which was profitable to a few only. It was found that votes and promises could be more easily bargained for—bartered—and interchanged in streets and corners, than in general meetings;—and it was plainly perceived, that, should the College of Surgeons become one united and respectable body; should it become a Society of industrious men, especially of young men;
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and, most of all, of young men aspiring to any character of knowledge in their profession, the College would put away all this idle business ;—it could no longer endure those trifles which had hitherto been its sole and constant occupations ;—it would no longer be steered through all the wilds of politics, by a Deacon and his Council. The conclusion was obvious, and much to be feared. It was thought easier to pick up the scattered particles than to move the congregated mass ; and, for this worthy cause, the College was scattered like chaff ;—all means of disunion were provided ;—all (17) attempts at reunion were observed with a very jealous eye ; and the successive proposals of establishing a useful and improving Society out of those among the younger Members who wished to be usefully and honestly employed, has been so managed in the Deacon's Council as to show plainly that politics and science have no natural connection.

I make it my duty to speak thus plainly my sense of what I have seen, and of the tendency of it ; for this system has grown into such a flagrant enormity, that now the College of Surgeons (18) has degenerated into a set of politicians, not of the most exalted rank ; and every succeeding abuse has its particular end, and every movement explains what is designed. I think almost a man might forsake his profession, and still retain influence enough to struggle against a whole set of young men zealous and earnest to do well !!!

No one among us can be ignorant from what motives it is that men have sought to be placed in the chair of the Royal College of Surgeons. Their abilities to fulfil an honourable charge ;—their desire to acquit themselves well ;—their respectability in their profession ;—their long standing, or reputation, never enter into their own minds ;—no anxieties of this kind trouble the electors or the elected ; it is to procure an office that they are elected ; and, when they are elected, their object is almost ensured. For those who

need or desire such appointments, he must be an ill hearted man who does not feel some concern and sympathy, according to his degree of connection and intimacy; but he should feel himself infinitely degraded in showing his friendship in this way. Let us choke up this thoroughfare to politics through sacred ground; for while objects so tempting are in view, men will not be restrained. It is easy to perceive how the best and most industrious of our profession may be seduced by this rage like gaming, which absorbs all other thought, and disdains no means of acquiring its object. Often, in the entering into the world, a young person is like one "struggling for life among the waters," and feels those labours and hardships, those disappointments and necessities, which drive a thinking man almost to despair; without blame he is easily seduced from his profession; he is anxious to make provision for those depending on him the easiest and shortest way, and is induced to go after expectations far different from those which animated him in the first proud outset of life, when he thought he had made choice of that profession in which he could delight to work his way to a respectable station with pleasant labour.

The man who does this may be pitied, but cannot be blamed. Should a private individual see the companion of his early days abandon his profession, and break all those expectations which made a part, as it were, of their mutual friendship, and make himself wretchedly dependent on chances which no man can controul, and the slave of others, what would he feel? Could he approve of this? Would he not be sensible that his friend was lost to himself and to the world? And if a private friend should thus lament a man of abilities in his profession abandoning himself to such objects, should a College encourage this temper, or tempt its Members by bribes, or suffer them to abandon or neglect their profession, which it is the very essence of the institution to support? When once such motives and objects generally prevail,

prevail, and are considered as the direct or indirect motive of every connection among our fellow Members, they absorb every honest or industrious thought in the vortex of jealous and uneasy passions; and the business of the College, its offices, its public meetings, its annual elections, are all turned to this one point. A man shall pretend to solicit the chair of the Royal College of Surgeons from the most honourable motives—shall cheat his fellow Members with promises of reform—and yet shall neglect all those measures which might put science in motion, ensure improvement, raise the Society from its present meanness, and give to each individual Member his share of reputation—shall think of nothing but how to stick up, in the place which he must appear to leave, an image which will move when he draws the strings—of the pretty puppet!

Thus it is that our dishonour is perpetuated; that the President of the Royal College, and, by implication, every Member of it, becomes a suitor for some despicable post, and even in the Town Council is despised, but still must be gratified—because he has been made Convener—has got the command of his fellow Deacons—has drunk them into good humour with himself, and ill humour with the Town Council—has procured another set of votes—has established a second cabal; and, in short, has inoculated (19) another public body with that venomous infection which he has carried out of his own. To be plain, the College of Surgeons *does gamble with its votes for places and pensions such as they are*. Their President is as a consul to negotiate the trade for himself or his (20) friends, and Deacon after Deacon labours in the filthy craft without shame.

But, Sir, the open disgrace is nothing, compared with the inward unhappiness which prevails among us.—There is no chance of harmony or friendship among a public body, unless they are open, generous, and honest with each other, employed about some public

- public and responsible business, and with no thoughts which they may not easily disclose.—But, with us, no one knows what another is doing.—He looks in another's face, and sees that he has been tampered with; he sees counsels and whisperings in stairs and passages;—each is vexed with solicitations—jealousies foreign to his own honest thoughts are cunningly infused into his mind; he is irritated and stirred up against some particular person.—He
- (22) is his enemy before he knows.—Other reasons are acknowledged for liking or disliking, than those which arise from the mere intercourse of gentlemen one with another.
- (23) Is not this the pure spirit of party?—Has not the designing secrecy of these cabals an ill influence on the minds and manners of men?—Let me ask you, Sir, as a Member of this College, Has
- (24) a man leave to be neutral?—Has he leave to indulge the natural bent of his disposition?—Does he not see every moment men divided from him, almost without a motive, with whom he had expected to live in constant and useful friendship?—It has really come to pass, as Voltaire says, “That one must either be “hammer or anvil.”—He has no choice.—This spirit of party interrupts all friendship, but I hope not permanently—is deadly
- (25) to every principle of honour.—Accustomed to dabbling in the Town Council for posts, our Members learn to call it politics; and, having professed themselves politicians, they assume, along with the title, all the privileges of politicians—restlessness—neglect of their proper duties,—enmity without a cause, and breach of faith without a motive;—till, at last, every thing dishonest
- (26) ceases to be dishonourable;—and *divide and govern* is no doubt among the maxims which some assume as part of this broad charter, which confers on our little doings the title, the pri-
- (27) vileges, and apologies, and all the dignified villanies of high politics.—One solicits a vote to establish a friend in the President's chair—that that friend may assist another friend to make
- votes

votes in the Town Council—to procure a place which he has solicited for five years—For they are building a house of correction—and it will be soon built—and perhaps people will be put into it—and perhaps it will need a Surgeon,—and probably the Deacon of the year will be made Surgeon,—and very likely the salary that shall be assigned him will bear some sort of proportion to the steadiness of his influence ; and perhaps though he is elected this year, and has got the place, if he be not Deacon next year he may have no salary at all, and so get the dish which Grumio proposes to his termagant mistress, “ Now, good sweet “ lady, what would you think of the mustard without the meat.” This is the priest all shaven and shorn,—that loved the maiden all forlorn,—that *MILKED the COW with the CROOKED HORN*,—that tossed the dog,—that worried the cat,—that killed the rat,—that eat the malt,—that lay in the house that *JACK BUILT*.———

These are the purposes, Sir, for which you and I and all of us are kept in perpetual torment, till some among us have as fairly forgotten what a vote or a promise means, as they have the ten com- (28) mandments. Every thing dishonest ceases to be dishonourable, and all because it is called politics, till at last a person, either from making too nice distinctions, or too coarse distinctions, or from making no distinctions at all, promises a gentleman his vote to make him President of the College of Surgeons, as if he wished him success, and then proposes himself as a candidate, as if again he were so ABSURD as to wish himself success, and then he promises to keep his word and his HONOUR, as if he meant that both should succeed, and so he pulls with the left hand, and draws with the right. “ Then be these juggling friends no more believed that paulter “ with us in a double sense ; that keep the word of promise to our “ ear, and break it to our hope.—I’LL NOT FIGHT WITH THEE.”

But there is perhaps another interest working against all improvement, and it is the fancied superiority of certain gentlemen,
who

- who yet are prudent enough to secure that superiority by other means than a fair pre-eminence in knowledge. They are fearful of every
- (29) young man,—jealous of every approach,—their distinction would be infinitely lessened if they were surrounded by young people whose individual essays might compose a respectable volume. This is not generous, perhaps, but it is surely true. It is not my own observations only, it was the observation of other sensible men who felt it sorely. It has been said, that there are men against whom
- (30) you can commit no higher offence, than to show any anxiety that your profession should be generally improved : The least movement or tendency that way excites a jealousy and resistance, as if the struggle were for life and being. If this College were but what it should be, no one would dare to show even a lukewarm temper towards so high an interest, or, if he should dare to interrupt such useful designs, would be branded with the name of traitor to that science which he was sworn to promote.

- I would have the College of Surgeons look well to its respectability and good name, and let no individual Member say it is none of my concern.—We feel, indeed, little connection with this public body, because we have no common interest in it—we have no ho-
- (31) nour in being common Members of it ; the institution has been thoroughly degraded. But if it could be raised to a respectable station among Colleges, or if it should fall yet a little lower than we should indeed feel, how much we are individually affected by its state. Our profession stands on the difficult ground of public opinion, and in a public body the conduct of Members is more observed than they are apt to believe, and it forms a part of their general character—ours is a public profession and a busy one, every man's way of pursuing his profession is perfectly known, and that public which seems to think so little, and yet judges so truly, gives to every one his due reward.

It were well if the College of Surgeons, in place of striving to de- (32)
base itself every day more and more, in place of busying itself in
behalf of a few, not the most respectable of its Members, in cabals
and solicitations for petty offices, were to employ itself in matters
which might make the present Members respectable; and in settling
a system of education in a University where every kind of educa-
tion can be procured, such as would ensure a succession of valuable
Members who might maintain the respectability of the College and
the honour of a profession which needs continually to be supported;
for it stands upon the difficult ground of opinion, and by a very
little misconduct, all that makes it respectable, honourable, or use-
ful, might go to wreck. We must be serious when serious matters
are concerned.

You cannot be insensible of the strong reasons a Member has for
putting his thoughts together in this hasty way; and you must
have had some uneasy feelings on that occasion whether you have
been busied in conducting a matter which you have no reason to
be proud of; or whether you are submitting yourself, on the other
hand, composedly and quietly to what you must consider as no small
disgrace; whatever your connections in politics or in friendship
are, I hope and trust you will feel for a moment the necessity of
laying aside all such partial considerations, will come to the meet-
ings of the College prepared with the honest feelings of an inde-
pendent man, anxious for his profession, sensible of the mean con- (33)
dition into which the Royal College of Surgeons has fallen, and
ready to act a generous, open, and manly part in that College.

It is as a fellow Member that I address you; and if the Society
were what it should be, that would be a title of some import, ex-
pressing some degree of esteem and friendship—some fellowship in
occupation and intention—some privileges would be annexed to
that name, which at this time we cannot boast of, it should at
least imply that I meant very sincerely; and yet, when a private

Member addresses a public body, he cannot be without anxiety; nor resolve upon so bold a measure, with urgent motives, and long delay. The very first step he moves, he will feel all the delicacy of his situation; he will really feel himself performing a serious duty which nothing but a high sense of its importance can enable him to fulfil. He cannot suppose his private thoughts to have much influence unless they have been anticipated by his fellow Members. He cannot suppose the name of any individual to have the smallest influence in enforcing those sentiments; fortunately the subject rests less on authority than on common sense and sound judgment in the ordinary affairs of life; but in a case where some may choose to suppose themselves offended, it is not fit that any man should have leave to say, that by withholding his name, the writer of this letter means that it should be concealed; it never shall be withheld on any urgent occasion; and on an occasion so full of improprieties on the side of those whose conduct he condemns, he will be rather proud of any enmities he may entail upon himself from performing a duty so necessary, and but too long delayed; such duties are more honourably discharged in any open and public manner, than in those private conversations which are so liable to be misrepresented, and which cannot in our divided state be always exclusively in the presence of sincere friends. If I should have the happiness to find that these sentiments are in unison with those of the more respectable and independent of my fellow Members, I shall come forward and call a meeting of the College, and propose such laws as may perhaps render the whole College completely independent. Without this encouragement, it were presumption for any individual to move. But whatever you,

(34) as an individual, may resolve in the present disorderly state of our Society, I beseech you to begin, before it be too late, to regard yourself more, and to think yourself more highly connected with a Society which you might help to re-establish, whose re-establishment

ment would reflect honour on each of us,—which was once respectable;—which might be so easily restored;—whose privileges we have bought so dear, whose functions we should not suffer to be (35) thus disgraced.

A FELLOW MEMBER.

From my printing *verbatim* so long a paper, it will be understood that I think it of the highest authority and importance. Indeed it seems to me absolutely decisive of some of those points, which at present I wish to establish. It must not however be thought that I take any part in those disputes to which it relates, or mean to express or insinuate any opinion favourable to the indignant Fellow Member and his friends, or unfavourable to his opponents, whom he has treated so severely in his Philippic. I trust that he and his friends are too generous, and too just, to expect from me so injudicious and so dangerous a compliment; for which it cannot be doubted, that his opponents would insist on performing on me, in a grand style, the operation of bronchotomy; that is, in plain English, they would cut my throat from ear to ear; just as he and his friends would do, if I should pay their opponents so rash a compliment as to declare, or insinuate, that I regarded that inestimable private letter as a series of malevolent falsehoods from end to end.

To say the truth, I think a little scarification about the external fauces would be very properly bestowed on me, if I were mad enough to offer any opinion of persons and transactions, of which I neither know nor wish to know any thing. What I cannot, and will not do myself, it would be absurd to expect or desire the Managers, or any other person to do. Of what use then, it may be asked, can that printed letter be in this discussion? I think it may serve a very noble use, if we consider it logically; or, according to Mr John Bell's happy conceit, (Section 1. page 21.) take the Cyclops

hammer to it ; though indeed this appears to me somewhat like taking a sledge-hammer to break an egg.

First then, for the good of the public, and the credit of the Fellow Member and of his friends and adherents, we have the following plain, undeniable dilemma.—Every proposition, that is, every thing asserted, in the private letter, must be either true or false.

On this dilemma rests an equally undeniable trilemma.

If all those assertions are true, the persons of whom such things are truly said must be a parcel of bad dogs ; very bad dogs indeed.

If they are all false, those who have asserted, or by their approbation have sanctioned, such infamous falsehoods, must be a parcel of bad dogs ; very bad dogs indeed.

But some, for example one half, of those assertions, may be true, and the others false : if so, then both those persons of whom such things were truly said, and those persons who have falsely said such things of their brethren, must be very bad dogs ; and their whole College must be a set of the veriest miscreants that ever were incorporated either by Royal or Diabolical charter.

This last conclusion, being the most unfavourable of the three, and moreover being notoriously false in point of fact, and contrary to the most certain personal knowledge of the Managers of the Infirmary, and of many hundreds of the most respectable inhabitants of this city, may be set aside at once. It will then remain certain, that one or other of the two preceding conclusions must be true, namely, that one or other of the parties among the Surgeons must be a parcel of very bad dogs ; which was to be demonstrated : for this is all that concerns me, or the Managers, on the present occasion ; and I presume it will not be disputed by any one Member of the Royal College of Surgeons. It clearly implies the necessity of selection among them for Hospital-duty, and the gross impropriety of their numerous and promiscuous consultations.

tions. But if Mr John Bell or his Clients distrust my demonstration, they are heartily welcome to consult my Brother Cyclops, the Professor of Logic, and also, if they please, the Professor of Mathematics, and learn whether they can find any flaw in it.

As to the point, of who is right or who is wrong in their disputes, it is entirely their own business; and they may settle it at their leisure, or let it alone, as they think best. Perhaps they may take a useful hint from a little domestic occurrence which happened in London a few years ago. There lived, and perhaps still lives, in that gay city, a genteel and elegant couple, a perfect pattern of conjugal virtue and happiness; bating only that the husband was somewhat promiscuous in his amours, and the lady rather too unguarded in the distribution of her favours. Of course, it came to pass, once on a time, that the lady found her health considerably disordered, and in so particular a manner, that she was sure her husband must know it, and that his own could not be in a much better condition. Being a woman of sense, and spirit, and address, she took an opportunity to remonstrate with him, pretty sharply, on the injury that he had done her. He, being a thoroughly well-bred man, as well as a most affectionate husband, heard her out with the most polite and patient attention; and when she had done, "My dear," said he, "that there is a Pox in the family is pretty plain; but as to how it came into it,—I believe we had better let that point rest."

The general tenor of the private letter, from end to end, shows, much better than any particular extracts of it can do, the inveterate and increasing rancour that prevailed in the Royal College of Surgeons; the intolerable height to which it had come; the total destruction of all private harmony among its members; and, in some measure, the nature and subjects of their disputes: but, for the gratification of the curious, I have marked, by marginal numbers, a few passages, the most characteristic and expressive of those things.

things. From the passages (29, 30.) it is plain, that professional hatred and jealousy had its own share, as was to be expected, in exciting such bitter animosity. But from the passages (1, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 26, 27, 32.) it is equally plain, that their professional animosity was further embittered by dirty politics, as they are called ; that is, by fordid malignant corporation-disputes about loaves and fishes. It is impossible to read the passage (28) without feeling for the cruel situation of the indignant Fellow Member : it is horrible to think that a man of his pure disinterested benevolence ; of his high sense of honour and probity ; of his warm zeal for the advancement of science in general, and for the improvement of his own profession in particular ; and withal of such exalted notions of the dignity of his profession, and the glories of his Royal College, derived from so many charters, should be reduced to the sad necessity of herding with such a parcel of fellows as he declares his brethren to be ; a set of fellows, who had absolutely forgotten the Ten Commandments ; so completely and notoriously forgotten them, that he used that comparison, as the best he could think of, to give some notion how completely they had forgotten what a vote or a promise was. Then to see so great and good a man attempting to reform such a set of miscreants, and to rouse them to any thing great, or good, or honourable, must excite, in every person, admiration blended with pity ; admiration for his glowing zeal, and pity for his hopeless undertaking ; compared to which the labour of Hercules, in cleansing the Augean stable, was but a morning's pastime. This author's desperate attempt is evidently of the same kind with that of calcining ice into gunpowder, or of extracting sun-beams from cucumbers.

It will be easier, in the course of nature, to make a thousand new men, than to mend even one of those unpromising subjects that he had to do with.

Without

Without the help of profound logic, or any very laborious or minute discussion, they may almost guess what the public would think of their Royal College, on reading that private printed letter : or if not, they will understand it at once by considering a similar case. Some fourscore years ago all the wits and all the wise men of Dublin were posed to understand how it came to pass that a certain clergyman's nails were always black and dirty. Stella, Swift's good friend, explained it at once, by observing that it was with scratching himself.

The passages marked (14, 15, and 16.) deserve peculiar attention, and require a very ample commentary ; as when duly considered they afford the most convincing proof of that kind of manners and warfare, which, as I have already stated, prevailed in the Royal College before Mr John Bell was a member of it ; and which, it now appears by the private letter, had not ceased in summer 1798 ; twelve good years after he was a member of the College, and only two years before my Memorial came forth. The indignant Fellow Member has indeed been very happy in the delicate general expression, *loathsome excesses*, which he employs to denote that detestable practice of brawling. This expression is the more delicate and dignified, that it is ambiguous. It may be understood to mean only the common physical effects of excessive drinking, on the human stomach ; which Cicero, in his own coarse style, has expressed in the well known words, *a tertia hora, bibebatur, ludebatur, vomebatur* : and more fully in another place, *aliquod Lapitharum aut Centaurorum convivium ferebatur : in quo nemo potest dicere, utrum iste plus biberit, an vomuerit, an effuderit*. *Torquati rara gloria*, says Pliny, *non lassasse sermone, non levatum vomitione, non altera corporis parte, dum biberet ; matutinas obisse vigiliis, plurimum hausisse uno potu, &c.* But indeed the sentiments expressed by the indignant Fellow Member amply explain what kind of excesses he meant. Far from wondering that men exasperated by such sentiments of one another, should
come

come to blows, as soon as they got drunk, or even sooner ; the wonder is, that they did not eat one another on the spot, like King Duncan's horses ; who seem indeed to have been very spirited beasts.

The most extraordinary circumstance in or about that private letter, or perhaps in all the disputes that have prevailed in the Royal College, is, that a person knowing what the majority of his brethren was, should wish to have their convivial, or as he calls them, *public* meetings continued. Any prudent man, of a peaceable disposition, and above all a skilful Surgeon, who knows the extreme danger of a fractured skull, and the precarious success of the operation of the trepan, I should think, could no more wish to dine or sup in such company, than to partake of a banquet with a Royal College of Tygers ; where he could not fail to know, that, long before he was half seas over, his right-hand neighbour would probably take it into his head to eat him raw, as a man would eat an oyster. I suspect more was meant than has yet appeared or been avowed, by that unaccountable eagerness to continue or to renew those convivial brawls, and that the majority of the Society had some prudential reasons, connected with certain notions of personal safety, for so peremptorily putting an end to them.

It must be observed, that though the author of the private letter had rashly said, (15), that those loathsome excesses had *absolutely ceased*, yet in a few lines after, (16), he very properly corrects that little slip of his pen, and tells us only, that they had *well nigh ceased*. Such a correction of his own text, must give to every reader a high notion of his strict accuracy and veracity. *Well nigh ceased*, seems to me to mean, *still continued* : but if they had *absolutely ceased*, such a private letter, or even one sentence *viva voce* from the author of it, would have been forty times more than enough to renew them with more inveteracy than ever.

It is impossible to read what he has said, (15), without sharing his indignation at his Brethren, for using those loathsome excesses

as a *pretence* for putting an end to the convivial meetings, at which they occurred ; for this was adding insult to injury.

Every body knows, that by a *pretence* is meant, not only a false reason or argument, but one publicly declared, in order to conceal something *worse*, more disgraceful, and less fit to be known or avowed : as for example, “ Hold your tongue, Sir,” said a great orator, in an altercation with one of inferior genius, “ don’t we “ all know that your wife, under *pretence* of keeping a bawdy-house, is a receiver of stolen goods.”

But I doubt whether the cutting off their convivial suppers was so great an injury to the Fellow Member and his Brethren as they supposed ; or at least whether it was meant as such an injury. If the true purpose of it was not fully explained to them, no doubt they must have shared the indignation, the anguish, and the despair of Sancho Panza, the first day that he dined in public in his government of Barrataria, and found a Doctor at his elbow, who conjured away every good dish that appeared on his table, and advised him to dine on a wafer and a slice of marmalade.

I have generally found that my patients, when I advise them to abridge their diet, look sour at me ; and many of them, I am sure, have never forgiven me for urging that wholesome advice.

I had not the honour to be of the consultation which determined upon reforming the diet of the Royal College of Surgeons ; nor do I know who assisted at it : but I shrewdly suspect, that a certain pale-faced water-drinking gentleman, who shall be nameless, was at the bottom of it.

At any rate, I am sure I shall not be suspected either of falsehood or flattery, when I declare, that I think the reform was very necessary and judicious. No better physical means could be devised, to put an end to those loathsome excesses, which had become such an intolerable abomination.

It is but fair to suppose that they all knew well and believed the important Aphorisms of Hippocrates on the subject of diet :

His qui in circuitibus exacerbantur (particularly about the times of annual Corporation and Borough Elections) *nihil dare oportet, neque cogere*, (that is, let there be no cramming of them), *sed auferre de oppositionibus, ante judicationes.* 1. 19. ;—*Si ex morbo cibum capiens quis non fiat validus, significat quod corpus uberiore alimento utitur.* *Si vero cibum non capienti hoc contingat, nosse oportet quod evacuatione opus habet.* 2. 8. *Quicunque morbi ex repletionem sunt, evacuatio sanat.* 2. 22. ; and above all, *Impura corpora quanto magis nutries tanto magis lædes.* 2. 10. Surely if ever there was a foul body in this world, full of the foulest humours, performing daily the foulest actions, and loaded with the foulest reproaches, it must have been the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, at the very time when the Author of the private letter was so enraged at the very needful and wholesome abridging of their full diet.

Any of them, who were men of reading, might even be supposed to have known the philosophical principles of that part of Dietetics, as explained in Prior's Alma.

*The plainest man alive may tell ye,
Her seat of empire is the Belly :
From hence she sends out those supplies,
Which make us either stout or wise :
The strength of every other member
Is founded on your Belly-timber :
The qualms or raptures of your blood
Rise in proportion to your food.
Your stomach makes your fabric roll,
Just as the bias rules the bowl.
That great Achilles might employ
The strength design'd to ruin Troy,*

He

*He dined on lions marrow, spread
 On toasts of ammunition-bread :
 But by his mother sent away,
 Amongst the Thracian girls to play,
 Effeminate he sat and quiet :
 Strange product of a cheese-cake diet.
 Observe the various operations
 Of food and drink in several nations.
 Was ever Tartar fierce or cruel
 Upon the strength of water-gruel ?
 But who shall stand his rage and force,
 If first he rides, then eats his horse ?
 Sallads and eggs, and lighter fare,
 Tune the Italian spark's guitar :
 And if I take Dan Congreve right,
 Pudding and beef make Britons fight.*

But from the truly scientific accuracy with which that very needful and salutary change of regimen was conducted, particularly the well-judged distinction of allowing the Royal College its public breakfasts, taking away only its carnivorous and Bacchanalian meals ; it is plain to me, that the members of the consultation had gone to the very fountainhead of all sound doctrine concerning the diet of patients : I mean Pythagoras ; whose original writings are unfortunately lost ; but, happily for mankind, the substance of them has been preserved, and made immortal in the elegant poems of Ovid.

*Primusque animalia mensis
 Arcuit imponi : primus quoque talibus ora
 Docta quidem solvit, sed non et credita, verbis.
 Parcite, mortales, dapibus temerare nefandis*

*Corpora. Sunt fruges, sunt deducentia ramos
 Pondere poma suo, tumidæque in vitibus uvæ:
 Sunt herbæ dulces: sunt quæ mitescere flamma,
 Mollirique queant. Nec vobis lacteus humor
 Eripitur, nec mella thymi redolentia florem.
 Prodiga divitias alimentaue mitia tellus
 Suggestit; atque epulas sine cæde et sanguine præbet.
 Carne feræ sedant jejunia: nec tamen omnes;
 Quippe equus, et pecudes, armentaque, gramine vivunt.
 At quibus ingenium est immansuetumque ferumque,
 Armeniæ Tigres, iracundique Leones,
 Cumque Lupi Ursi, dapibus cum sanguine gaudent.*

It is plain from the strong general recommendation of vegetable aliment of all kinds, and above all, from the specific mention of milk and honey, that Pythagoras had in view precisely such meals as our good Scotch breakfasts. Never was the soundness of those precepts better illustrated, or his philosophy more triumphantly established, than by the instantaneous and almost miraculous effect of his wholesome vegetable diet on that foul carnivorous body for which it was ordered.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, and I have been at some pains to make the proper inquiries, not one slap on the face, or kick on the breech, has been administered, at any meeting of the Royal College of Surgeons, or even by any Member of that College to another, at an accidental meeting, or in consultation, since that change of diet took place. Yet during this long period, now of more than four years, and indeed very soon after the College was put on that vegetable diet, very decisive experiments were made, which afforded the strongest possible proof of its wonderful efficacy.

On this point, the private letter, already printed verbatim, and amply discussed, may be considered as an *experimentum crucis*. The author of it flourishes, and long may he flourish as an example to his Brethren, in safety, honour, and prosperity.

But there was a time, when such an author, before he could have uttered half a sentence of such a Philippic, would have been kicked, knocked down, and put head foremost into the fire. Then every body knows, that during the last two years there have been in the Royal College the keenest debates that ever were known, conducted with infinite spirit and eloquence, and expressed in "words far bitterer than wormwood, that would in Job or "Grizel stir mood." But all this clapperclawing, which, but a few years before, would have produced many blows and much bloodshed, has terminated (I mean has produced, for no body knows when, how, or if ever it will terminate) in a few spirited lawsuits, which do harm to nobody, and much good to the gentlemen of the long robe. They have also afforded much, and I hope will afford much more amusement to the public. I am so thoroughly convinced of the wholesome influence of the Pythagorean diet on that Royal College, that, if the Members of it will faithfully adhere to the same tea and coffee regimen for only five and twenty or thirty years, I shall not be much afraid to drink tea with them: but in the mean time I should think that rather imprudent; and I am sure they will consider me as a person *d'une aimable absence*.

I know that another article of regimen, by many supposed to be of great importance, was duly attended to at their public Pythagorean breakfasts; I mean the soothing influence of music; which I, for want of musical ear, cannot judge of; but those who can, and who have fairly tried its effects, consider as a great article of the *regimen mentis quod medicorum est*. Music, says the Mourning Bride,
hath

hath charms to soothe a savage breast, to soften rocks, and bend a knotted oak.

Certain it is, that, with the help of a good band of music, their public breakfasts, even in times of the greatest animosity, passed with all the gentleness and tranquillity of the annual meetings of the good people commonly called Quakers.

*Quid mirum? ubi illis carminibus stupens
Demittit atras bellua centiceps
Aures, et intorti capillis
Eumenidum recreantur angues.*

My curiosity was much excited to know how they contrived to obviate the well-known dangerous effects of the Bagpipe; which, to all true Scottish ears, has charms far more delightful than the harp of Orpheus, the lyre of Apollo, or the organ of St Cecilia.

But, besides its peculiar merit as a musical instrument, it is well known to be the most powerful military bellows that ever was invented; at least it is so to all good Scotchmen: for if there be but one spark of military ardour, as generally there are a good many, in a Scottish breast, the drone of the bagpipe never fails to blow it up to a flame, forty times more fierce than ever raged in Carron furnace.

This, the Ghosts of Bonaparte's invincible Legion, if they were produced in the Phantasmagoria, will readily testify upon oath: as they cannot have forgotten, how ill they fared when opposed to the FORTY-SECOND. While we do justice to the valour of all the British troops on that memorable occasion, we must not forget that much honour is due to the Bagpipe.

I should have trembled for the honour of Pythagoras and his regimen, if the bagpipe had been introduced at the public breakfasts of the Royal College: but most judiciously and happily it was suppressed;

pressed ; and no questions were asked about it, by any Fellow of the Royal College.—But “ Even in their ashes live their wonted “ fires.” As I should be very sorry to lead any of them into an error, which might be fatal ; I think it right to warn them that, within these two years, I heard a very respectable senior member of their College declare loudly in the open street, so that I am sure he did not mean it to be a secret, that if it came to a *Pugnum* at any of their meetings, he was resolved to seize by the legs the smallest Fellow of their College, and to use him as a club or a bludgeon to defend himself, and annoy his enemies. A most horrible expedient certainly : worse than whipping them with scorpions : and I mention it here, that all whom it concerns may be on their guard ; especially those who are under the middle size.—A *Pugnum*, I understand, was the technical word, in their Royal College, for what is called in England a *Battle Royal*, and in Ireland a *Row*. Whether it be derived from *Pugnus* a fist, or from *Pugna* a battle, *Grammatici certant, et adhuc sub judice lis est*. I humbly conjecture that it comes from them both : and Cicero himself declares that he could not discover whether *Pugnus* was derived from *Pugna*, or *Pugna* from *Pugnus*.

It is wonderful to observe, that Mr John Bell, and the indignant Fellow Member, while they contradict one another flatly, on every point relating to the character, the conduct, and the professional merits, of the individual members of the Royal College of Surgeons, do yet agree perfectly in expressing the highest esteem, affection, and veneration, for the said Royal College, as a body corporate. Though by the by I doubt whether the Fellow Member knew what it was ; and at least Mr John Bell has given the most complete proof, even by his own definition of it, printed in Roman capitals in the 9th page of his second section, that he knew no
more

more about it than he does about the colleges in the planet Jupiter.

“ What is a College? as it relates to you and to your Infirmary?

“ A College is a constitutional barrier against the intrusion of ig-

“ norant, unworthy, or unprincipled men, into a profession which

“ should be ever sacred; and this barrier is the safeguard of the

“ poor!”

When Don Quixote mistook windmills for giants, and dirty inns for magnificent castles, he was thought insane: yet surely his error was not greater than what we here find deliberately asserted and printed by Mr John Bell, and no less deliberately adopted and sanctioned by his brethren.

Supposing *first*, for the sake of argument, however absurd or ridiculous it may be thought, that a College (of Surgeons) was *bona fide* meant for such a barrier as he describes; the *private letter*, whether it be a series of the purest truths, or a string of the most villanous lies, from end to end, affords forty times more than sufficient evidence, that the pretended barrier in question does not in the least answer the good purpose for which it was intended; but on the contrary, brings together, to the great annoyance of the public, of the poor, and of this Hospital, a parcel of the most *ignorant, unworthy, unprincipled* men, that ever were associated. But in truth a College is no more such a metaphorical barrier as he pretends, than it is literally a palisado, or a ditch, a redoubt, or a bastion. A College, as I should have thought every body must have known, is a society or assemblage of individuals, legally established and recognised; often incorporated by Royal Charter, on which account many of them have the title of Royal Colleges. Such Colleges, being constituted for very different purposes, must consist of very different kinds of Members.

Thus there is a College of Cardinals in the Roman Catholic church; a College of Electors, and a College of Princes in Germany; Colleges of school-boys, as at Eton and Westminster; Colleges of
learned

learned men, and of young men who are supposed to receive instruction from them, as at Oxford, Cambridge, and all other Universities ; a College of old soldiers, as at Chelsea ; a College of heralds ; a College of clergymen, and old women, and old men, as in Sion College, London. All Colleges, legally constituted, have certain rights, powers, and privileges, which the members composing them individually have not, some of which privileges, rights, and powers may be highly honourable, as well as advantageous, to the individual members of such Colleges. But there cannot be a greater mistake than to suppose that the name of College, or the title of Royal College, should confer on the individual members of any Society of Physicians or Surgeons, any honour, or dignity, any talents, knowledge, or virtues, which they did not possess before ; or should procure to them from the public any degree of estimation and confidence, which their own personal and professional merits could not procure them. On the contrary, nothing but such merits in the individual members of their Societies can make their titles of Royal Colleges respectable, or prevent them from becoming ridiculous.

The name of College had been so long and generally given to societies of learned men, that when the Physicians, first of London, and afterwards of Edinburgh, were incorporated by charter, the name of College was given to their Society, rather than that of corporation or company ; which had long been generally given to the various incorporated societies of mechanics and tradesmen. Some such distinction and pre-eminence seems to have been well merited by the Physicians both of London and Edinburgh, at the time when they respectively obtained their Royal Charters : for all of them were men of learned and liberal education ; and many of them were distinguished by superior learning and talents, and by their proficiency in various branches of science, and equally respectable for their personal merit, their liberal manners, and their

professional skill. Not being an antiquarian, I cannot specify exactly the time at which the Physicians of England first became distinguished in these respects; nor am I sufficiently acquainted with all the circumstances that contributed to give them that distinction, and to procure for their profession in general, and for themselves individually, unless they forfeited it by their own personal misconduct, a degree of public estimation and respect, which neither Physicians nor Physic ever yet obtained in any other country in the world. But I have no doubt that it must have proceeded chiefly from the superior merit of some individuals in England, who had embraced the profession of physic; for no other human means could have produced such an effect.

I believe, too, that honourable rank in public estimation, which they have long preserved in England, was in a great measure obtained soon after the revival of letters.

From a circumstance, trivial in itself, and which few people now-a-days think of attending to, it is plain, that the Physicians in England, who were men of learned education and liberal manners, were anxious to establish a distinction between themselves and the common herd of Medical Practitioners, who had neither the education of scholars, nor the sentiments or manners of gentlemen.

At the time to which I allude, when mankind were but just beginning to emerge from the darkest and most barbarous ignorance, the superiority conferred by a learned and liberal education must have been infinitely greater than at present, when knowledge is much more generally diffused; and when the most useful knowledge is made accessible even to those who know no other language but their mother tongue. But in those days, as in our own, the chief advantage of a liberal education, was not the superior knowledge acquired by perusing the “ ample page, rich
“ with

“ with the spoils of time,” but the great and permanent improvement of the mental faculties themselves.

*Adde quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
Emollit mores, nec finit esse feros.*

The name assumed by those learned and eminent men of our profession, who first raised it to such high estimation in England, is a proof of what they thought themselves, and wished to be thought by their countrymen. They called themselves *Physicians*, which properly signifies men versed in the knowledge of nature, and certainly bears no relation whatever to the trade of curing diseases. They wished to be distinguished from the vulgar herd of those who practised the same trade, and to be regarded as philosophers and men of science, who endeavoured to apply their knowledge to that good purpose. Their pretensions seem to have been in some measure admitted; and at least the appellation by which they chose to be distinguished, was soon universally adopted by their countrymen, though equally different from the old English name of men of their profession, and from their appellation in every other language. In old English, before the revival of letters, and, I believe, both in the Saxon and the Celtic languages, we were called *Leeches*: a word which, in this, its original and proper sense, has been quite obsolete for two or three hundred years; and all over England is understood to denote exclusively one of our humblest auxiliaries; the ugly black water-insect, which we occasionally employ as a bloodsucker.

I have no doubt that the lucky conceit, of substituting the term *Physician* for *Leech*, contributed much to raise our profession in the estimation of the good people of England, just as the corresponding substitution of the word *Interest* for *Usury*, very soon reconciled them to making profit by lending money; which,

while the same thing went by the odious name of usury, was regarded as infamous, and criminal in the highest degree. Perhaps I refine in my speculations, when I say, that a charter, establishing a Royal College of Leeches, would at any time have been ridiculous: but I am sure there is no refinement in saying, that if Henry VIII. had established, instead of a company or corporation, a Royal College of Barber-Surgeons in London, such a College, and every individual member of it, would have been laughed at: and that if Charles II. a year or two after constituting the Physicians of Edinburgh a Royal College, had graciously conferred the same honour on the Barber-Surgeons of this city, it would have been understood that that facetious Monarch meant it as a joke upon the Physicians.

I cannot help thinking, that there would have been something absurd and ridiculous, in conferring the title Royal College on a company of such illiterate and illiberal men as Deacon Kennedy and his friends; whose memorial in 1737, and whose conduct towards the Managers of the Infirmary, have been amply discussed already. But I can see nothing absurd or ridiculous in the title of Royal College, by our present Sovereign conferred first on the Company of Surgeons in Edinburgh, and afterwards on their brethren in London.

The reason of this difference in the sentiments with which the same title, conferred on the same societies, at different times, would have been regarded by the public, is very plain. The business of the Physician had become a learned and liberal profession, while that of the Surgeon continued a low mechanical art, practised by illiterate and vulgar men: but gradually, though slowly, and chiefly in the course of the last century, the art of Surgery has been much improved, has been cultivated on scientific principles, and has been practised by many men of liberal education and manners. In consequence of this, not only the profes-

sion

sion in general, but many individuals who practise it, have risen greatly, and I hope shall long continue to rise in public estimation ; notwithstanding the degrading effect of Deacon Kennedy's memorial, and of the indignant Fellow Member's private letter, and the still more debasing influence of Mr John Bell's Answer to me ; approved and sanctioned by so many of his brethren. Such compositions must infallibly decide the character and rank which the authors of them, and their approvers and abettors, are to hold in the world : and to them their works will stick, like a Leprosy, never to be cleansed, till the Ethiopian learns to change his skin, and the leopard his spots.

While from these evident causes Surgery has risen, Physic from the opposite, but no less evident causes, has sunk in public estimation. Very many physicians, in this island, have had no advantages in point of learned and liberal education ; and of course despise most heartily such education, and take care to express very freely their contempt of it. Still worse, they frequently take occasion to convince the world, by their writings, that they are profoundly ignorant of the first principles of science, and even of grammar. I think it more than possible, that, in fifty or an hundred years, the business of a Physician will not be regarded, even in England, as either a learned or a liberal profession. And in the mean time it is plain that there must be an end of all dreams of the superior dignity of that branch of the profession which is called Physic, in opposition to Surgery : for certainly no such superiority will be acknowledged by mankind ; nor any dignity or distinction among Physicians and Surgeons, but what fairly and necessarily results from their own personal and professional merits, and from the various situations and circumstances in which they and their patients are placed. Those worthy members of society, who enjoy excellent health, but whose business leads them to go much in the way of cannon or even musket-balls,

will

will certainly, and with good reason, consider Surgeons as more useful, and therefore more important and dignified personages, than Physicians, whose services they can generally dispense with. While those graver and wiser personages, who have prudence enough to keep out of the way of such balls, but not to keep out of the way of good eating and drinking, will soon learn due respect for our branch of the Faculty.

*The first Physicians by Debauch were made ;
Excess began, and Sloth sustains the Trade :*

Which, so begun, and so sustained, I hold to be a surer fund than the Three per Cent. Consols ; and much more likely to survive the shocks of revolutions, and all the horrors of foreign and of civil war.

But whenever Physicians or Surgeons seek to derive importance and honour, from being Fellows of a Royal College, instead of doing honour to that title by their own personal and professional conduct, they will infallibly make themselves and their title objects of contempt and derision.

A charter from his Majesty may, in a moment, establish in this city, a Royal College of Chimney-Sweepers : and if this were done, no doubt the good people of Edinburgh would find unspeakable comfort, in having their chimneys swept, just as at present they do in getting their pulses felt, and their legs cut off, by the President and Fellows of a Royal College. Yet I do not believe our chimneys would be better swept than they have hitherto been ; but there can be no doubt, that the President and Fellows of that Sable College would entertain very high notions of their own personal and professional dignity ; and yet they would be, without one exception, the same vulgar, ignorant, dirty fellows, that they are at present.

With

With respect to the third and last period of chirurgical warfare in this city, extending from the time when my former Memorial was distributed, to the present hour; though during it the inveterate spirit of party among the Surgeons has not produced those terrible explosions, or loathsome excesses, as one of their own indignant Fellow Members is pleased to call them, which used frequently to occur in former times at their convivial and other meetings; thanks to the tea and coffee regimen to which the Royal College has been confined during the whole of this most trying period: we yet have ample proof, that the same noble spirit, under a different form, has continued to burn with unabated flame.

The public is already so well acquainted, both with the general tenor, and with many particular instances, of their party proceedings, that to enlarge on them here would be superfluous, and even improper. Most of them have already appeared in print; and those printed documents of them have been handed about with great assiduity and perseverance. First the public was regaled with observations, addresses, remarks, and plans for the better management of the chirurgical department of the Hospital. All that could be learned with certainty from these was, that the system of the indiscriminate attendance of the Surgeons on any plan of rotation, which one party contended for as right and proper in every respect, good for the Surgeons, and beneficial to the patients; was, by the other party, reprobated in the strongest terms, as absolutely irreconcilable with the good of the Hospital.

Both parties must have known perfectly the truth, and must often have been eye-witnesses of the good or bad effects of that mode of attendance, which one of them wished to preserve, and the other to abolish. There could be no *mistake*, therefore, on
either

either side: the one party must have known perfectly that the other was saying the thing which was not: and I dare say, Hogarth himself would have been well pleased to have been raised from the dead, though but for half an hour, just to have made a few sketches of the countenances of the hostile parties, as they surveyed one another in battle array.

The Managers of the Infirmary, and the public at large, cannot be embarrassed by that gross and irreconcilable contradiction of the two contending parties among the Surgeons. If all the arguments and illustrations that I have urged, both in my former Memorial and in this one; if the common sense of mankind; if the conduct of the Managers of other Hospitals in the appointment of Physicians and Surgeons to them; if the conduct of the Managers of this Infirmary at its first institution; if the conduct of the majority of the Surgeons at that time; and the very arguments which they used, with success, to get that odious system established, which now, after sixty years experience of its badness, is happily abolished; be not sufficient to shew on which side the truth is; nay, if all these considerations were to go for nothing in this discussion; still the unanimous resolution of the Surgeons themselves, 9th August 1784, must shew, *indisputably*, which of the two parties is entitled to credit on the present occasion.

As it was manifestly impossible for them to make any impression on one another by reason and argument, and as the *argumentum baculinum* was precluded by the wholesome influence of their Pythagorean diet, no resource was left them, but to go to Law. To Law they went accordingly, with a spirit and inveteracy worthy of their former renown.

Scarce was the first general lawsuit well begun, the one I mean between the College of Surgeons and the Managers of the Infirmary, when out of it there grew another lawsuit. Mr John Bell, having dreamed a dream, whether sleeping or waking does not appear,

pear, nor is it of any consequence, something about some peculiar personal right that he, *qua* individual John Bell, had to attend, and consult, and operate, in the Infirmary; of course went to law with the Managers, on the force of the said dream. This indeed is not at all wonderful; for it seems to have been a lively and most delightful dream: pretty much the reverse of Dido's dreary, dismal, horrid dream, when she was forsaken by that ungrateful vagabond Æneas.

“ *Semperque relinqui
Sola sibi, semper longam incommittata videtur
Ire viam, et Tyrios deserta querere terra.*”

It is impossible not to lament, both for his own sake and that of the public, that so enchanting a dream should have passed away so soon, or indeed that it should ever have passed away.

“ How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,” must seem to him all the uses of this world, when compared with those rapturous visions of universal benevolence and love to mankind, of the boundless improvement of Surgery, and the endless glories of his profession, “ *quorum pars magna fuit.*” “ Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.” If he was asleep when he saw that glorious vision, he ought never to have wakened: if he was awake, he ought never to have slept again; “ All his functions suiting, with forms, to his conceit, and all for nothing.”

Yet it cannot be said, that in the present instance, the “ baseless fabric of a vision leaves not a wreck behind:” It has left “ *monumentum ære perennius,*” in the form of an excellent and most eloquent law-paper; written by Mr George Joseph Bell, John's brother, and entitled, “ Memorial for John Bell and Charles Bell, Members of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh, against the Managers of the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh.” This lit-

the Memorial, which, exclusive of its Appendix, contains only 78 quarto pages, is well worth "*multorum camelorum onus*" of ordinary law-papers. It certainly was not the fault of their Lawyer, that the two brothers did not win their cause triumphantly, with full costs, and damages: for no body, I am sure, can read that Memorial, without great admiration of the author's ingenuity and eloquence. But there was something wanting to make it effectual, and something which neither ingenuity nor eloquence can supply. When Archimedes undertook to move the world with his foot, he very wisely made it a condition, that he should have some place to stand upon. Now something of this kind, like a fulcrum to a great lever, I conceive to be necessary to give the most ingenious law-paper, or the most eloquent pleading, any effect, in moving a court of justice, or shaking even such a little world as that of Edinburgh. The delightful dream on which it was founded, was plainly insufficient for this purpose.

That Memorial has also the merit of being the best exposition, and most ample commentary, that can be desired or conceived, on Mr John Bell's doctrine delivered in his Answer to me. As it made a part of the proceedings in the Supreme Court of Justice in this country, I presume it would be improper, perhaps might be deemed a contempt of court, to offer any remarks on the arguments that it contains; even if this were wanted, which certainly is not the case now; that lawsuit having been given up, as soon as the dream on which it was founded had passed away. But on the well-known principle, "*Traçant fabrilis fabri, promittunt me- dici quod medicorum est,*" I hope I shall not be deemed guilty of any impropriety, when I make some physical remarks on it.

It appears from the whole tenor, nay even from the very title of that Memorial, that Mr Charles Bell had dreamed, *verbatim et literatim*, the same dream which his elder brother had dreamed. This, if the dream had gone no farther, might be attributed to their
their

their being both of the same education and profession, Surgeons. But it appears plainly that a third brother, a lawyer, of totally different education, profession, and habits of reading and thinking, has also dreamed the same dream, without the least variation. This can proceed from nothing but a strong innate family-likeness; and must be considered as a very striking example of the force of that principle; at least as splendid as that of the three brothers, of my kindred, who were Professors of Mathematics at the same time; or as that of the three noble noseless brothers, who flourished in England in the reign of Charles II.

From the uncommon spirit, ingenuity, and eloquence, with which that Memorial is written, totally unlike the dry, laborious, ponderous argument of a lawyer, who pleads a cause that he knows to be bad, merely to earn his fee; there can be no doubt that the author of it was perfectly in earnest; that is, that he had dreamed the same dream with his brothers; else surely, instead of arguing their cause for them, he would have prevented them from engaging in such a lawsuit: and it is equally plain, that, as soon as the dream was at an end, they desisted from their lawsuit, without even waiting for the decision of the court. This surely their brother and lawyer would not have allowed, if the dream had continued with him, after it had ceased with them. If there had been three hundred brothers of the Bellian race, I have not a doubt that all of them would have dreamed exactly the same dream. But if three thousand men, of talents, education, and knowledge, equal to theirs, or even greater, were to dream straight forwards, without interruption, for three thousand centuries, I do not believe that any one of them could dream one iota of it, any more than he could dream Homer's Iliad, Newton's Principia, or the Devil's Concerto.

Scarce had the Lawyers time to sing *Te Deum* on the happy conclusion of the eighteenth century, with the beginning of a

most promising lawsuit, whose ending who could tell; the one I mean between the two Great Corporations, the College of Surgeons and the Managers of the Infirmary; when they were blessed with the birth of another lawsuit, that of Mess. John and Charles Bell with the said Managers. Scarce had they time to hail this happy omen, that ushered in the nineteenth century, with the fairest promises that it would prove an age of gold; scarce could they welcome the auspicious day that gave it to the Court,

Salve fugacis gloria seculi ;
Salve secunda digna dies nota ;
Salve vetustæ vitæ imago,
Et specimen venientis ævi,

when, from the same unquenchable and everlasting fire, there suddenly burst forth, almost at the same instant, three fresh explosions, in the form of three new lawsuits, each of them more inveterate than either of the former two. These I conceive to bear the same relation to their common source, that the little volcanos, from time to time thrown up on the sides of Mount Ætna, during a great eruption, bear to that majestic father of volcanos. We call them little, though each of them singly is greater and more tremendous than Vesuvius; because they are small in comparison of their parent Ætna. The whole Court was thunderstruck. No Member of it had powers of understanding, or of imagination, adequate to so new and so vast an object. Some of them thought it was a kind of Hydra: but there could not be a greater mistake, or a greater indignity to this dreadful fiery monster; compared to which, the Lernæan Hydra was but a caterpillar. Besides, this *non descript* monster did not wait, like the Hydra, till its first head was chopped off, before it showed another and another; but came forth at once with many heads,

“ fierce

“ fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell ;” and no doubt would have gone on, multiplying itself at head and tail, and back, and belly, and sides, like a polypus, to the delight and emolument of every limb of the law in this country ; had it not been for a sudden and lamentable deficiency of the one thing needful, without which there can be no Law, no War, no Evil, and very little Phyfic : Money, money ; which, “ above ground, or “ under, was not to be found.”

*Nec, quæ sulfureis ardet fornacibus, Ætne
Ignea semper erit : neque enim fuit ignea semper.
Nempe ubi terra cibos alimentaque pingua flammæ
Non dabit, absumptis per longum viribus ævum,
Naturæque suum nutrimentum deerit edaci ;
Non feret illa famem : desertaque deferet ignes.*

There is reason to think, that the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons, who so eagerly went to law, did not rightly understand its *Naturam edacem* ; but they must soon have perceived, that, without much pressing, or any very nice fauce, it would eat up all the food, *alimentaque pingua flammæ*, that have come from Peru and Chili since the days of Pizarro ; “ ever eating, “ never cloying, all devouring, all destroying.”

My collection of the law-papers already printed in the course of these lawfuits, though I am sorry to say it is far from complete, amounts to more than 500 pages in quarto.

It would be very improper for me to enter into any minute discussion of causes not yet out of court : but there can be no harm in mentioning what the subjects of them have been. Two Fellows of the Royal College have prosecuted the majority of their brethren, for almost disfranchising them ; at least striking their names out of the list of the Fellows who were to be allowed to vote in
the

the great question between their College and the Managers of the Infirmary: and the President of their Royal College prosecutes eighteen Fellows of it, for ignominiously turning him out of his chair, and censuring him, in terms almost too gross to mention, for some pretended misconduct on his part. I should not have presumed to give here the words of such a censure, if they had not already appeared in print, and been very generally known; nor can I even now print them, without premising, that the person so ignominiously treated by his own College, is a gentleman highly and universally esteemed both for his personal and professional character.

That vote of censure was in the following terms: “ I am directed by the Royal College of Surgeons, of which you are President, to represent to you from this chair, that you have (with your eyes open) trampled on our laws, which, by your situation as President, you were bound more particularly to defend, and that your offence is highly aggravated by your conduct previous to the meeting called by the committee, as well as from the nature of the defence you urged in your own behalf; and by direction of the College, I now censure you, in the strongest and most unequivocal manner, for such conduct.”

Whatever damages may be awarded him by a court of justice for such a wrong, we have already complete evidence that it was a wrong of the grossest kind, proceeding from the most rancorous spirit of party; for the same College, afterwards, when he went out of office, *unanimously* voted him its thanks for his upright and gentlemanlike conduct, as its President, and for his faithful attention to the honour and interest of the College. Not having access to their minutes, I cannot give the precise words of that vote of thanks; but I am well assured that it was expressed in the strongest and most honourable terms, and was in substance what I have stated.

I am well assured likewise, that one of the other two gentlemen, who has been prosecuting them for striking his name out of their list, has since that time had the honour of receiving their public thanks for his faithful and meritorious services as a Member of their College.

One little specimen more may suffice to convey some notion of the noble spirit with which their disputes have been conducted. A Fellow of their College, settled in a town in England, was prevailed on to come to Edinburgh, from the distance of more than a hundred and fifty miles, just by his vote to settle those disputes with which their Royal College was tormented. He came to Edinburgh and voted accordingly; but had scarce returned, or, as some say, was only on his way returning to his home, happy no doubt in the thought of having so easily and effectually put an end to their disputes, when he had three summonses executed upon him, (*Anglicè*, had three writs served on him), indicating the commencement of three several lawsuits, in which he had the agreeable surprise of finding himself involved for his pains, and actually under prosecution for damages to the amount of more than L. 10,000.

Such, from the most precise and authentic information, as well as from many written, and many more printed, documents, that I have seen, I firmly believe to have been the *facts*, in whatever words they may be expressed, with respect to the spirit and temper that have prevailed in the Royal College of Surgeons, and the manner in which their warfare has been carried on, during the last seven and twenty years; that is, ever since they were *elected* (as one of their own most eloquent and spirited writers calls it) into a Royal College, and for two years before they obtained that honour.

How

How much better or worse they were, when associated only as a corporation, I really do not know ; and I should think it hardly worth while to enquire. We know sufficiently what their sentiments, and words, and actions were, about the years 1737 and 1738 ; and also what they were between the years 1766 and 1769, the period of their second and longest contest with the Managers of the Infirmary.

It is more interesting to observe the strange effect which their new and honourable title has had on many of the Members of that Royal College ; in making them believe that they are, individually and collectively, every thing that is great, and good, and amiable, in human nature ; and that their “ College is a constitutional barrier against the intrusion of ignorant, unworthy, or unprincipled men, into a profession which should be ever sacred ; and “ that this barrier is the safeguard of the poor : ” and all this at the very time when they have been reviling one another most inveterately, as the most ignorant, unworthy, and unprincipled of men.

The calamitous situation of those who have adopted such strange whims about the nature and purpose of a Royal College of Surgeons, and the importance and dignity, as well as the peculiarly amiable character which that title gives to every individual Member of such a Society, must equally rouse the attention of men of science, especially of Physicians, and call forth the strongest exertions of every person who has any pretensions to humanity, Christian charity, or brotherly love.

It is indeed impossible to think of it without speculating a little concerning its cause, and wishing to relieve the unhappy sufferers, though they themselves are insensible of their own misfortune. To many people it must appear incredible, that any individual, or any set of men, who can eat their victuals, and perform the common offices of nature, in a decent and cleanly manner, should
ever

ever adopt such notions, and persist in them, in spite of the daily evidence of their reason and of their senses. But such things are not impossible: there have been many real instances, just like the well known fictitious case of Don Quixote, of persons sufficiently in their senses on all subjects but one, and yet on that one as completely insane as he was on knight-errantry. Examples have not been very rare of men who believed their legs to be made of straw, or their posteriors of glass; and who could never be set right on these points, though perfectly rational upon every other, and even very judiciously and tenderly careful of the supposed brittle and infirm parts of their constitutions. We read, in Aretæus, (chapter 6th of his first book on the Causes and Symptoms of Chronic Diseases), of a strange fellow, whose insanity was of a very peculiar and limited kind: he was by trade a carpenter; and in his own shop, and while employed in his own business, as much in his senses as any body. He would measure, and cut, and saw, and fit his timber very nicely; and was withal a shrewd fellow, who could make a bargain, or a bill, as well as any man. But the instant that he laid down his tools, and quitted his shop and his work, and turned his nose towards the forum, he began to groan, and shrug his shoulders; and by the time he got to the forum, was *bona fide* as mad as a March hare; but always returned to his senses, as soon as he was brought back to his shop: so that, as Aretæus sagaciously observes, his understanding and his trade seemed to be confined within the same narrow limits.

If the infatuation, with respect to the College of Surgeons, had occurred in only one individual, I should have considered his case as exactly similar to that of the carpenter: but as it has affected many individuals of the same College at the same time, which is not in the common course of nature with respect to maniacal affections, I cannot think it properly referable to any known kind of mental derangement.

To adopt such an unfavourable opinion of their case, would be the same, or at least as uncharitable, as to regard it as a judgment upon them, for their misdeeds done as a body to the sick poor in the Royal Infirmary. It would be thought, that I wished to represent it as near akin to that blindness, with which, on a memorable occasion, some men of Sodom were struck, for persisting in their wickedness.

On considering their case attentively, I had the good fortune to discover the real nature and cause of it; and I can even propose, with great confidence, the proper means for their relief. They will surely be sensible of their obligations to me, when they know that I have gone more than half way to the Devil on their account. Having clearly perceived, that their infatuation did not proceed from any bodily disorder or infirmity, I was led to suspect that it was a case of enchantment. As I am but little versed in magic myself, I could not trust to my own judgment on such a point; and therefore consulted the sage enchanter Merlin; who most obligingly considered their case with attention, and soon convinced me, by the most decisive arguments, that it was enchantment, as real, and of the same kind, as that of Dulcinea del Toboso.

The same kind enchanter explained to me fully how the magic spell might be broken: it being a settled point in the black art, that for every spell there is a counter spell.

The chief, or only difficulty, in breaking a spell, when the counter spell is once discovered, arises from the circumstance, that persons enchanted, just like mad persons, and persons in love, are very unwilling to be disenchanting.

I fear there may be some such difficulty in disenchanting those whose piteous case has given occasion to these remarks: but the difficulty, with due care and address, may be surmounted. The counter spell, or mode of disenchanting them, is in substance the same

fame with that which Merlin directed Sancho Panza to employ on his own person, in order to disenchant Dulcinea ; only *mutatis mutandis*. This being a collegiate enchantment, it is necessary that the spell for breaking it be performed publicly, and with due solemnity, in the Hall of the Royal College, and by the President, and all the Fellows of it in rotation ; in which case, it is demonstrable, that it will be faithfully and ably performed ; and with such complete success, that the enchanted persons, one after another, as soon as number three thousand three hundred is duly applied to the place appointed, shall feel themselves not only disenchanting *pro hac vice*, but effectually preserved from all danger of such another enchantment as long as they live. Q. E. F.

One of the most amusing of Mr John Bell's conceits, is the admirable contrast which he draws between Physic and Surgery ; in order to show that experience, which every body allows to be highly valuable in a Physician, is of no consequence, and really not needed in a Surgeon. This, to the best of my judgment, is the sum and substance of his long and elaborate argument, to prove, that it can be no disadvantage to the patients in the Hospital, to be treated by the youngest and most inexperienced Surgeons in rotation. It is plain, at least, that nothing less can establish the point for which he contends. I quote his own words, (Section 2. page 48.) in which that doctrine is most explicitly delivered. " He knows little indeed of our common profession, " who is not sensible, that experience is less necessary in Surgery " than in Medical Practice, and in operations not at all. An operation is a dissection, which he who is able to perform, is able to " perform ! Far from learning by experience, a Surgeon must be " perfect in operations before he presume to touch the knife.

“ But the memorialist is so ignorant in our profession, that he
 “ applies to it the rules and canons of his own: he believes that
 “ Surgery, like Medicine, is an uncertain and speculative science!
 “ he believes, that in our profession, what is wise and learned to-
 “ day, may be wrong and ignorant to-morrow! that our profes-
 “ sion is learnt by experience, and not by study! and finally, that
 “ old Surgeons only can excel: though, if this were true, ours
 “ would be a profession in which no man could excel, since the
 “ grey head of wisdom is generally accompanied with a shaking
 “ and faltering hand.”

I have no inclination to dispute Mr John Bell's assertion, that he who *is able* to perform an operation or a dissection, *is able* to perform it; on the contrary, I admit that most important proposition in its full extent; and I declare, that I think it contains more truth, than all the rest of his pamphlet put together. It is indeed completely loaded and stuffed with truth. But still a very important question remains; namely, Who are able to perform dissections or operations? Certainly not every man who chooses Surgery as a profession, for it is notorious, that but a very small proportion of them ever become even tolerable operators; and that many of them have soon become so sensible of their own incapacity in that respect, that for the greater part of their lives, they have avoided, as much as possible, attempting any nice, difficult, or dangerous operation. I doubt much, whether even all the Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh are equally, or nearly equally able to perform that kind of dissection which is called an operation: the general persuasion of mankind most notoriously is, that they are not: as is amply testified by their anxiety to choose a skilful operator when themselves or any of their families are to undergo an operation. It is not even pretended by Mr John Bell himself, who has said so much of their examinations by the Royal College, that they are obliged to exhibit any specimens of their manual dexterity

terity as dissectors or operators, in presence of that august Body, before they can become Members of it; and it is certain, that, within the memory of many people still living, several of them when they had occasion to show in the Theatre of this Hospital how well they could dissect a living subject, or as the vulgar call it, perform an operation, acquitted themselves so scurvily, that they were severely criticised by some of their own loving Brethren, as well as by a great body of Students, who witnessed the dissections which they attempted to perform.

I can even remember distinctly to have heard a most irreverent expression applied to some of them, who, after repeated attempts of that kind, had withdrawn from the Hospital-duty: That they were hissed off the stage.

Further, granting that an operation is a dissection, I humbly conceive that there are very different kinds of dissections, and that many a man who can perform one kind of dissection very well, may be a little embarrassed at first if he tries his hand at another kind. Thus, the flaying and cutting up of an ox are unquestionably dissections; so is the carving of a roasted hare or a partridge at table: but I believe a journeyman butcher can perform those dissections of an ox, and many a fine Lady those of a hare or partridge, as well as any Professor of Anatomy in Europe; or even as Mr John Bell himself: yet both the butcher and the Lady might be much embarrassed, if required to perform those dissections, *alias* operations, on living persons, which are often found necessary in hospitals. That kind of dissection, which is chiefly required in learning and teaching Anatomy, in order to show distinctly the minute and exquisite structure of every part of the animal body, is widely different from that kind of dissection which is necessary in performing Chirurgical operations. A certain degree of Anatomical knowledge is absolutely necessary for operating as a Surgeon with safety and success; but many Surgeons, who have had much
practice

practice and high reputation as operators, would be sadly at a loss, if they were required to dissect and demonstrate the minute structure of parts, as is done in an Anatomical Theatre: and I shrewdly suspect, that many good Anatomists, and expert dissectors, would feel themselves much embarrassed, if they were required to operate on the living subject. I know not what Mr John Bell and his clients may think of the Professors of Anatomy in this respect; but, I presume, none of them can fancy themselves either better Anatomists, or more expert dissectors than Dr Monroe's assistant Mr Fyfe; yet, I doubt whether any one of them, if he had occasion to undergo a nice and dangerous operation, would choose for the operator, Mr Fyfe, rather than an experienced Surgeon.

Further, if every Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, at the hour of his admission, were as good a dissector of the living, as Mr Fyfe is of the dead, it would not follow that they were all equally well qualified for being Hospital Surgeons. The performing of operations, though an essential, is not the most important, part, of a Surgeon's duty and profession. It is more to a Surgeon's credit to save one limb, than to cut off a hundred. Much of Chirurgical practice has nothing to do with dissection: the curing of wounds and ulcers; the treatment of external inflammation and gangrene; the discharging of tumours; the reducing of ruptures and of dislocated limbs; and the setting of broken bones; are daily and most important objects of Chirurgical practice, and such as no practice nor dexterity in dissection can teach. With due humility, I must beg leave to think, that a Surgeon may improve in those parts of his profession, just as a Physician does in his, by the help of experience.

If the science of Surgery were as certain, and the practice of the art as perfect, as Mr John Bell's argument imports, there could be no disputes or controversies in it: indeed from some of his expressions it should seem, that such is his opinion, or at least that
such

such is the belief which he wishes to impress on his readers. I suspect, however, that this perfect agreement in opinion, if it exists at all, must be near a-kin to that of an English Jury, that I remember to have heard of. They had retired, as usual, to consider of their verdict; and had staid so long, that the Judge, who tried the cause, and who thought it a very plain one, growing impatient, called them into Court again, and asked them, whether they had agreed on their verdict. "Yes, my Lord," said a keen little jurymen, in a violent passion, "I am agreed, but here are eleven obstinate fellows that I believe will never agree." Far from believing that Mr John Bell agrees with all his brethren on every point, or even on the most important points, of the Theory and Practice of Surgery, I doubt much whether he agrees with the majority of them, nay whether he even agrees with all the Surgeons of his own name. Surgeons have unquestionably much more merit, and display much higher genius, in their everlasting professional disputes, than Physicians can do in theirs: for as much as the subjects of Chirurgical disputes generally come under the cognizance of their senses of sight and feeling; so that unless they choose it, they need not trust much to the faint and deceitful light of their own reason. Yet certain it is, that in defiance of their own senses, they now and then commit mistakes as gross, and engage in disputes as inveterate, as Physicians can do for their hearts. I remember, many years ago, to have heard of a mistake and dispute of this kind, in this city, about a Lady's arm, which one Surgeon examined and dressed as he thought it required. But the Lady finding no relief, or rather finding her arm growing worse and more painful, got another Surgeon to examine it; partly I believe by accident, the former Surgeon not being to be found, when she sent for him on account of her increasing sufferings. The second Surgeon, on examining the arm, found that one of the bones of it was broken; and accordingly set

set it properly, which soon gave her relief. But the former Surgeon would not acquiesce in this opinion or practice: nor do I believe that the two have to this hour agreed in their opinion about that case. Another case of the same kind, but infinitely worse, came under my own immediate view. The unfortunate subject of it was a relation of my own, one of whom I had a particular charge, one who had often carried me in her arms when I was an infant. One day the man in whose house she lodged came to tell me that she was very ill, and had got a swelled leg. Going instantly to see her, I found her very ill indeed; her leg greatly swelled, red, highly inflamed, bent in the middle, and much shorter than the other; so that I presume a child of seven years of age might have known at first sight, as I did, notwithstanding my criminal ignorance of Surgery, that the leg was broken. On enquiring into the history of the case, I learned that this accident had happened above a week before, by a fall on the floor of her room. It happened at night; and the persons about her, observing that her leg was much hurt, got a Surgeon, a Fellow of the Royal College of this city, to see her next morning. He saw her several times, sent her something to rub her leg with, which might with equal advantage to her, have been rubbed on her bed-post, but made no attempt to set her broken leg. This necessarily implies one of two things; either that he did not discover that her leg was broken, or else, that, knowing it to be broken, he would rather let her perish miserably, than take the trouble to set it. The circumstance which procured me intelligence of her miserable situation was the rapid increase of the fever, produced by the accident, and the beginning of delirium. Shocked at such an example of negligence, I ran immediately to get some other Surgeon to her assistance; and had not gone a hundred yards when I luckily met with one. This other Surgeon, whom for the present I shall call Dr William Farquharson, trusting to his honour that he will not mention

mention the name of his professional brother who was so *unfortunate* on that occasion, instantly went with me to the patient ; and on examining the leg, made me observe, what I had not attended to before, that not only the leg was broken, but the small bone of it (*Fibula*) was dislocated at the knee. Dr F. at first declined attempting to set the leg, not only on account of the high inflammation of it, but on account of the state of general fever, which was so bad that he considered the patient (very rightly as it afterwards appeared) to be a dying person. However, at my earnest entreaty, he endeavoured as soon as possible to set it, and I believe did it as well as it could be done ; but too late to save her life ; she died in a few days with the increasing fever and delirium. There was properly no dispute or contradiction about that case ; Dr F. having very prudently, before he attempted to set the leg, taken with him a *third* Surgeon, a particular friend of the first Surgeon, to see, and be convinced that the leg was really broken, and that the patient was likely to die of the fever produced by the fracture, which had been so atrociously neglected.

As the best commentary on Mr John Bell's text, about the certainty and perfection of the Science and the Art of Surgery, I shall mention a little incident which occurred, a few years ago, in a certain London Hospital.

A patient was in it under the care of the Physicians, on account of a very bad leg, which baffled their skill, and appeared to them almost hopeless ; they therefore requested a consultation of the Surgeons, to examine the leg, and to decide what should be done with it. The Surgeons accordingly met, examined it, consulted about it, and resolved, *nemine contradicente*, that the leg could not be saved, and ought to be cut off. By the unerring rules of Surgery, they cut it off without delay. But, strange to tell, the Physicians, at their next visit, on examining the patient, found, to their great astonishment, the supposed hopeless leg as fast to his body

as ever it had been. The puzzle was soon explained. It happened that the man had *two* legs, both of them very bad; one of them the Physicians thought they could save, the other they despaired of. There being but a right and a wrong, it was not very marvellous that the consultation took the wrong. Both Physicians and Surgeons I believe were a little disconcerted at that *quid pro quo*; and as it was thought rather a strong measure to cut off both the man's legs, they exerted themselves to the utmost, and saved the leg which should have been cut off: so that after all the poor man was but one leg out of pocket. As I was not an eye-witness of this edifying transaction, it is proper to give some notion of the genealogy of the story, which is very short and simple. I have it from a Reverend Clergyman, who had it from one of the Physicians concerned, and who is now one of the most eminent of his profession in London. I know both the Clergyman and the Physician intimately; I know them both to be men of veracity and men of sense; and I have no doubt that the facts were just as I have stated them.

This remarkable misfortune which I have described, and many others of the same kind, but often worse in degree, have proceeded evidently, from the greater eagerness of several Surgeons to perform operations, than to cure their patients without them. This unfortunate bias I have heard more than one of them confess having felt in themselves. Whether it proceeds from their eager desire to acquire dexterity as operators, or from a kind of vanity and ambition to display that dexterity which they had, or thought they had, already acquired, perhaps by practising on the dead subject, is a matter of little or no consequence to their living patients. Nor is it much better for these, when they fall into the hands of Surgeons, who, conscious of their own deficiencies as operators, are unwilling to expose them to public view, and therefore decline, or postpone from time to time, operations which might

might probably have succeeded, if performed early, but which, when long delayed, have but a small chance of success, even when performed by the most skilful operator.

It is difficult to conceive any thing more repugnant to daily, or at least to by far too frequent experience, than Mr John Bell's doctrine, of the great certainty of the science, and the high perfection of the art of surgery. To confine myself to a few examples, which must have been known to him, of the obstinate and irreconcilable differences of opinion amongst Surgeons, I shall mention, in the first place, some of the particulars of that case already mentioned in general terms, page 132. 3. of this Memorial. A gentleman had suffered much distress and pain by a disorder, which had continued and increased on him for thirteen months, during which time it had baffled the skill of two eminent Surgeons whom he had employed, and who certainly had not discovered, and do not seem even to have suspected, what was the nature of the disorder. In this condition he came to Edinburgh, and consulted Mr Benjamin Bell, Mr Arrot, and myself. There was no doubt, or difficulty, or difference of opinion among us, as to the nature of his disease, which was as plain a Hydrocele as ever was seen. We told him so immediately, explained to him the nature of the disorder, and assured him of the facility and certainty of curing it by an operation, and the impossibility of curing it any other way. He was at first much surpris'd, and somewhat incredulous, perhaps thinking it impossible that his former Surgeons could have been so strangely mistaken: but on finding his Edinburgh Surgeons perfectly decided in their opinion, and willing to operate immediately, he soon acquiesced in their judgment. Understanding, however, that he must expect to be confined, by the operation, for a fortnight or more, he said it was necessary for him to return home, in order to arrange his affairs for so long an absence; but intimated his resolution of either returning to Edinburgh in two

or three weeks, or else sending for Mr Benjamin Bell, and allowing him to operate.

Several weeks elapsed, yet we heard no more of our patient ; till I, happening to pass through the place where he lived, the latitude and longitude of which I do not choose at present to remember, went to see him, and inquired into his situation. His bodily health was nearly *in statu quo*, but I found him in a state of mental anguish and horror not to be described. His former Surgeons, as soon as he informed them of our opinion, and advice as to the operation, declared against it in the strongest possible terms, assuring him that the disease could not be what we had said. Still worse, I found my patient minutely informed of all the horrible consequences that a man in his situation had to fear ; but with this unlucky persuasion, that they were all to be dreaded from the *operation*, not from the *disease* ; as I, and I presume every Physician and Surgeon in Europe, conceive to be the case.

I told him, it was impossible for me to alter my opinion ; and that he must judge for himself, and follow the advice which he liked best ; at the same time informing him, that the horrible consequences which he had been taught to dread were to be apprehended from the disease, not from the operation ; by which alone they could be prevented. He asked me to meet with his Surgeons, and to consult with them about his case. I had even a formal invitation from the Surgeons themselves to such a consultation, which I peremptorily declined, not being in the humour, just at that time, to be clapperclawed by those gentlemen ; and as to clapperclawing them, at any time, I should have thought it a very needless labour. The next news I heard of my patient, from one of his most intimate friends, was, that Mr John Bell had, by his two Surgeons, been called in to see him ; evidently in hopes that he would decide against the opinion of Mr Benjamin Bell and the operation.

But

But Mr John Bell was too sharp for them, and very honestly declared that the disease was a Hydrocele; offered to perform the operation instantly, and did actually perform it, I believe, the very next day, and cured the patient without the smallest difficulty.

Yet those two Surgeons are men of eminence in their profession; and if they were to come and settle in Edinburgh, I dare say would expect to take the lead of three fourths of their brethren in this city, and probably of Mr John Bell himself.

The same certain science, and enlightened and candid application of its principles, have often produced those fierce debates, and irreconcilable differences of opinion, in the consulting-room of this Hospital, to which I alluded in my former Memorial.

Many a question, after full consultation and debate, has been decided by a vote, each party holding fast its own first opinion; some such points have been decided by a very small majority, some even by the attending Surgeon's casting vote: some have been decided first one way, then the opposite; the minority on the first day watching their opportunity, when the house was *properly* assembled, and when those whose opinions might be supposed to have had the greatest weight, were absent; so that their votes at least could not tell in favour of their opinion. One miserable example of a sufferer by this practice, whom for the present I shall call J. R. I saw about two years ago; long after she had been dismissed from the Hospital as incurable. What her fate might have been, if the long and keenly contested question about an operation to be performed on her had been decided the other way, I cannot guess; but I scarce think it could have been worse than what she has actually suffered, ever since the hour that the operation was performed. I never saw a more shocking or miserable object; nor can I conceive a stronger refutation of Mr John Bell's doctrine of the certainty of the principles of surgery. Some Surgeons,

Surgeons, who have done good service in this Hospital, make no scruple to declare, that the vexation arising from those obstinate debates, and repeated consultations, was one of their chief reasons for withdrawing from its duties.

Mr John Bell can scarce have forgotten a pretty remarkable consultation about a certain tumour. The first Surgeon who was desired to declare his opinion, pronounced, without hesitation, that it was a rupture, somewhat constricted, but not completely strangulated. This gentleman, a pretty sharp one too, *nec pluribus impar*, one whom I could trust against half a dozen or more of his brethren, happened to be of *one* party, or of *no* party, whichever Mr John Bell pleases to call it. Of course, those of the other party were unanimously convinced that it was no rupture, but only a bubo, which was to be brought to suppuration by poultices, and opened when ripe. They would not even listen to the suggestion of one of the t'other-side gentlemen, who wickedly proposed, that, as the man's life was at stake, they should make an incision through the skin, which could be attended with no danger, and would enable them to judge with certainty what was the nature of the tumour. Being the majority, they determined for the bubo and the poultice.

Next day, when they met again in consultation, and began to enquire about the patient, the bird was flown. This was a prodigious triumph to the antirupturists, who were sure that a man with so bad a rupture could not have run away. But the rupturists were as sharp and as obstinate as their adversaries; and most maliciously traced the poor man to his own home, at the distance of a few miles from Edinburgh. It appeared that the poor man, who, from what he felt in his inside, was well convinced that the vote of bubo and poultice was to do him no good, eloped from the Hospital next morning, and found means to crawl to a cart, which he found on the street,
and

and which conveyed him to his own house, where he died in two or three days. But having been traced by that time, permission was obtained to open his body, which was done in presence of several antirupturists as well as rupturists: the rupture was found, as was expected by the latter party. It is even surmised, that a preparation of the morbid parts is still in the possession of one of the antirupturists. When I state such an occurrence, it may naturally be asked by those unacquainted with medical warfare, whether I really believe it; and if I do, whether I impute such conduct to sheer ignorance, or to the most unfeeling cruelty, and a deliberate purpose of something little less than murder. As to the first question, I answer without scruple, that I believe it firmly; because I have heard it from several Surgeons who were concerned in the transaction, and whom I know to be men of sense and veracity. As to the second question, with much diffidence, I give it as my opinion, that it could not be either from ignorance, or from a deliberate purpose of letting the poor man perish. Such ignorance is incredible of any person who knows what a rupture is; and such deliberate cruelty towards an unoffending, unhappy object, is inconsistent with my notions of human nature. I humbly conceive that the misfortune arose, as many other similar misfortunes have arisen, from the violent spirit of party, and that irritation and inveteracy which are almost peculiar to medical disputants. I think it highly probable, that if those gentlemen who were so unfortunate on that occasion had been acting singly, or even several of them together, but coolly, and not pitted against their opponents, they would have judged and acted properly. I know no bounds to the violence of party-spirit. I believe that, like the spirit of gaming, or any very violent passion, it often makes men deaf, blind, and insensible to every other consideration, even to the most sacred and tender that human nature knows; and with this horrible aggravation, that many, far from being ashamed of

of

of it, consider it as their proudest boast and most honourable distinction; while few, if any, think themselves individually responsible, or even blameable, for what is done by their party.

This, however, I humbly suggest with a *salvo jure* to all concerned. If they can explain, in any manner more satisfactory to the public, and more honourable to themselves, the facts which I have stated, and which I believe can scarce be disputed, but, if disputed, may be established by irresistible evidence, they are heartily welcome to do it, and I shall be glad to see it done.

Among the other specimens of the great certainty of Surgery, and of the equal and perfect skill of the Fellows of the Royal College of this City, who of late years have taken a share of the Hospital-duty, and formed those multitudinous consultations, which appeared to me much worse than useless; I must not omit to mention the irreconcilable difference of opinion with respect to a patient having, or not having, a stone in his bladder. From a work on Surgery, published a few years ago by one of these Surgeons, it appears to have been no uncommon occurrence, for one or two Surgeons of a numerous consultation to have felt the stone, on founding the patient, and for ten or a dozen more of them, after repeated trials, not to have been able to feel it. These differences of opinion seem to have been independent of any spirit of party; and, supposing, what it would be highly uncandid to doubt, that they all spoke and acted *bona fide*, necessarily imply, that some of them were much more expert than the majority of their brethren, at that little preliminary operation. It is admitted, I presume, that a stone, even of considerable size, may be in the bladder, but in such a situation, by having formed a sac for itself, that the most expert Surgeon cannot feel it. But when a stone is distinctly felt by two or three, and not felt at all by ten or a dozen of the same profession, it is difficult to conceive any other cause for such a difference, but some want of dexterity in the greater number

ber of them. A most cruel evil is implied in the founding of an unhappy patient by every individual of a numerous consultation, even if they were all perfectly skilful; and still worse, if any of them are unskilful, aukward, or rough, in the use of the instrument. No patient, it may fairly be presumed, ever was founded by such a consultation, unless he had either a stone, or some other disease in his bladder, implying such tenderness of it, that the slightest touch of the staff must have given exquisite pain. It may be doubted whether some such multitudinous foundings have not amounted to a more severe operation, I mean to greater torture, than the final operation of cutting for the stone by a skilful operator. It is admitted, at least, to have been so bad, that often it was necessary to employ, for several days, warm bathing; opiates, and other medicines, to undo the mischief that had been done by such a preliminary consultation. See *Latta's Surgery*, vol. 1. page 479. to 493.

The most unexceptionable evidence on this point, perhaps the only evidence that Mr John Bell will admit to be competent, is the said Mr John Bell himself. "I never shall forget the sight I once saw, in our well regulated and cleanly Hospital, where there was such an exhibition of *ulcera verminosa*, as perhaps never was seen even by Paree at the siege of Turin. Dr Aitken had taken an apprehension that we were too apt to trouble sores by officious dressing, and being deceived, like many others, by the wonderful reunion of fresh wounds, when laid together, and not dressed for eight days, he formed this promising conclusion, that, as according to the common saying, the "blood is the best balsam for a wound," its own foul matter should be the best balsam for a sore. He resolved not to dress the sores of the surgical wards at shorter periods than five or six days; but that the matter might not run through the bed during that period, he made the nurses gather all their old sponges, and apply to each

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“ fore a sponge. Four or five days after, a great many gentlemen
 “ attended in the wards, on the tiptoe of expectation for the
 “ further issue of this experiment ! Each fore, as it was suc-
 “ cessively opened, was in a horrible condition, “ the worms they
 “ crept in, and the worms they crept out,” and the Doctor was in
 “ great disgrace till he discovered the cause. He had given the
 “ nurses very strict injunctions about cleansing their sponges,
 “ which they very strictly obeyed ; but each sponge, after being
 “ washed, was laid by the window to dry ; it was hatching season
 “ with the great flies, who were very glad of the sponges to deposit
 “ their eggs in ; and when these eggs were laid into the fores,
 “ and kept there for some days, with all the advantages of such a
 “ situation, they did hatch with a vengeance.” *Principles of Sur-
 gery, by John Bell. 1801. Page 102. & 103.*

It must surely have been very satisfactory and comfortable to the poor patients who were made the subjects of that absurd experiment, to learn from such good authority, that the worms which had been eating them up alive, had not grown out of their flesh, but were all of them the lawful children of their fathers and mothers, commonly called blue-bottles : but still there seems to have been either great uncertainty of the principles of Surgery, even so lately as since Mr John Bell was hatched, or else some very ignorant wrong-headed Surgeons permitted to practise in the Royal Infirmary. One other instance I shall give of the uncertainty of the principles of Surgery, and of the fluctuation, as well as difference of opinion, in the grand consultation of Surgeons. After minutely describing a case of femoral aneurism, Mr John Bell proceeds in these words.

“ This was not indeed one of those cases where one might say
 “ the patient had not many days to live, but yet it was a case
 “ inevitably fatal ! Operation was unavoidable ! It was for the pur-
 “ pose of having the operation performed that he was laid in the
 “ Hospital ; and he was a manly hardy fellow, willing to submit

“ to

“ to any kind of Surgery, especially if it could but preserve his
 “ limb.

“ Mr Harkness lost no time in calling a consultation. Out of
 “ twelve gentlemen present, eight voted for preserving the limb.
 “ But on the morrow, when Mr Harkness had prepared every
 “ thing for the operation of aneurism, the gentlemen taking the
 “ case again under review, and especially reflecting on the danger-
 “ ous combination of fracture and aneurism, and on the difficulty
 “ of saving a person who has even the most simple aneurism of
 “ the thigh, they reversed their former opinion. Mr Harkness
 “ was forced to amputate the limb; and on the fifth or sixth day
 “ the man died of gangrene.”

That Mr Harkness, or any Surgeon in the world, should be
forced to do what he thought right, is impossible; because he
 would be very willing to do it. We must therefore understand by
 this very edifying story, that the attending Surgeon was *forced* to
 perform an operation which he thought improper, and to cut off a
 limb which he thought he could have saved; nay, which a grand
 consultation had thought might be saved, though the said con-
 sultation thought fit to reverse its own decision, and to find
 that wrong to-day which was right yesterday. A consultation
 of twelve Physicians, or of twelve Judges, notwithstanding the
 glorious uncertainty both of Law and Physic, could have done no-
 thing worse. Indeed, when two opposite decisions are given in a
 law-suit, it is usual to allow the patient a rubber-game. In some
 countries, if I am rightly informed, the patient has a right to de-
 mand such a rubber: but in Surgery there is not always time for
 a rubber-consultation; and therefore, if such discordant and dan-
 gerous consultations are permitted, reason, and justice, and hu-
 manity, all require that a box and dice should always be ready in
 the consulting room; and that, whenever the second consultation
 reverses the decision of the first, the patient should be entitled, if

he choofes, to have a throw of the dice to settle the question ; juft that he may have an equal chance for his limb or for his life.

I have had occafion to learn, from the beft authority, that is, from one of the Surgeons who acted in that uncivil, untractable manner, that the decifions of certain grand consultations of Surgeons in this Hofpital have been fuch, that the attending Surgeon, whofe province it was to operate, has abfolutely mutinied, and refufed to do it; telling his brethren, “ Gentlemen, if you “ choofe to cut off this man’s leg, or to cut this man for the “ ftone, you may, but I will not.” Such adventures muft no doubt have greatly ftrengthened their sentiments of mutual efteem and confidence, and fully eftablifhed, to the conviction of the moft obftinate and incredulous of them, the unerring certainty of the principles of Surgery.

It is the more edifying to obferve how confidently Mr John Bell maintains the certainty of the principles of Surgery, which implies the perfect uniformity of the practice of it, that his own works contain the moft ample and unequivocal proof, that there are numberlefs difputes among Surgeons, almoft as inveterate, and many of them as frivolous, as thofe which have agitated Phyficians. If there were no other evidence of this well-known truth, his own writings would afford forty times more than enough. I doubt whether it be poffible to read, ftraight forwards, twenty pages of any of his books on Surgery, without meeting with feveral proofs and examples of this kind. The curious or diftruffful may make the trial at their leifure, and judge for themfelves. But there is one illuftrious fpecimen of it in a book, and a part of a book, in which it could not have been expected ; but withal fo glaring and decifive, that it muft not be allowed to pafs unnoticed. The book to which I allude is his Answer to me ; and the part of that book is the 3d fection of it, page 37. immediately after he had contended moft vehemently,

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all through his 2d section, (of 50 pages), for the uniform certainty of the principles of Surgery. It may fairly be presumed, that, if on any occasion he could have abstained from professional disputes, and from treating in the most contemptuous manner the opinions and practices of his brethren from whom he chose to dissent, he would have done it on that occasion, on which it was his avowed object to prove that there are no disputes among them. But, *Naturam expellas furcâ, tamen usque recurret*, or, as the French express it, *Harlequin toujours Harlequin*. In that section of his answer he has introduced a long history, which looks like an old lecture, about the operation of cutting for the stone. But be it new, or be it old, it certainly bears no more relation to the question between the Managers and the Surgeons, than the colour of my volunteer uniform, or the number of my ancestors who have been Professors. It is however made interesting, and for my purpose inestimable, by the noble specimen of chirurgical controversy that he has introduced into it, with respect to the use of the cutting gorget, which he reprobates in the bitterest terms of contempt and reproach.

That instrument has long been in general use; and to the best of my knowledge and belief, is to this day used by at least nineteen in twenty of the best, the most intelligent, the most experienced, and the most successful operators in the world. It was introduced at first from considerations of prudence and humanity; to lessen the risk of cutting for the stone, by giving, if not absolute certainty, at least a very great probability, much greater than Surgeons had before, of cutting into the bladder at once, and in the proper place. It has answered its purpose better than most contrivances either in Physic or Surgery have done. By means of it the operation has been performed on many thousands of patients with perfect success. Some individual Surgeons have employed it successfully on several hundreds of patients. That it has not al-

ways made the operation successful, is a melancholy truth: nor do I believe that it ever can be made perfectly safe, or uniformly successful, by any instrument, or any human contrivance.

It is a still more melancholy truth, that it has often been employed by operators so unskilful or unpractised, that they knew not how to use it properly, and consequently missed the bladder, which they meant to cut, and perforated the nearest bowel, thereby inflicting a mortal wound. Nothing worse could have happened to those patients, if their Surgeons had attempted to cut them for the stone without either staff or gorget. But the important consideration is, what would probably have been the fate of many hundreds, or thousands, of those who have recovered perfectly when cut by the gorget, if their Surgeons had not used that instrument, and had cut them with a plain knife? It is not only my opinion, which on such a question must go for nothing, but the opinion of the best Surgeons, amply testified by their using the cutting gorget, that many more would have perished by that operation if the cutting gorget had not been used. A very expert anatomist may cut for the stone successfully without the help of the gorget, but not more successfully or more certainly than he could do with it; and it is not only *possible*, but *probable*, that a good anatomist may *sometimes* miss the bladder, and kill his patient, by not using the gorget: neither of which misfortunes would have happened if he had used it: and what is only *possible*, or somewhat *probable*, of a very accurate anatomist and expert operator, approaches very near to *certainly*, with respect to the generality of Surgeons. The fairest way to judge of this question is, to ask any reasonable number of well-informed professional men, Physicians and Surgeons, how they would choose to be cut, with the gorget or without it, by any Surgeon taken by lot out of a whole corporation or College of Surgeons, if they themselves were

were obliged to submit to the dangerous operation in question. I shrewdly suspect, that at least ninety-nine in the hundred of them would declare for the cutting gorget; and I doubt much whether Mr John Bell himself would be in the minority.

If any illustration of so plain a subject were needed, no better could be desired than one long since rendered familiar and almost trite by the use which BACON hath made of it.

A few men, but they must be few indeed, may have acquired such marvellous dexterity, as to be able to draw a straight line, or an exact circle, with their unassisted hand, without the help of the ruler or compasses: but any ordinary man can draw such a straight line, or such a circle, with the help of the proper instruments, at least as well, probably better, than the most expert draughtsman can do without them. If on any occasion, surely when the life of a man is at stake, the certainty, or, if certainty be not attainable, the greatest probability of success that can be attained, is infinitely to be preferred to a vain ostentatious display of extraordinary dexterity.

With his usual bad luck as to all matters of fact, Mr John Bell (section 3. page 37.) has quoted me as expressing contempt and disapprobation of the cutting gorget employed by Surgeons in lithotomy. Nothing could be farther from my thoughts; nor is there any expression in my former Memorial that can be construed or tortured into such a meaning. As it was intended to be perused by many who could not have known what was meant by a cutting gorget, instead of using that technical phrase, I *described* the instrument, as a curious knife, like a pointed scoop, with a very sharp edge: but surely such a description, which is perfectly just, denotes neither contempt nor approbation of it. Far from despising that instrument, I respect very highly the caution, the modesty, and the humanity of that Surgeon, whoever he was, who contrived a little improvement of it, so as to bring the use of it almost to perfect certainty.

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The improvement to which I allude, was the addition of a little button at the point of it; corresponding to which the groove in the staff was made wider at each end than at the middle; so that when the button at the end of the gorget was put into the groove at the proper place, which it was impossible to miss, it could not get out again till it reached the further end of the staff, in the bladder; and consequently the operator could not miss the bladder, or fail to cut it in the proper place. I remember to have heard more than thirty years ago, that the late Mr Adie, who was dead before my time, but who in his day was considered as at the head of his profession, and one of the best operators ever known in Edinburgh, at one time actually employed that kind of instrument. I never heard what were the objections to its general use; but I remember to have been told, that Mr Adie himself was startled at the button coming out of the groove, when the gorget was fully introduced, with a kind of snap, which he had not expected: but this certainly can be no serious objection to its use.

Mr John Bell (sect. 2. page 12.) has hinted something of the Surgeons operating in the Royal Infirmary, “under the observance and *criticism* of their fellow-members, assisted, and supported, and *controuled*, by the presence of numbers; in an open area too, where all the world is free to pronounce judgment on his merits!—If the desire of reputation, or the fear of shame; *the malignancy of enemies*, who cannot be excluded from operations, or *the praise of friends*, who will group around him; if fame, fortune, and his own happiness being at stake, will not induce the young Surgeon to apply to his profession, and become excellent, there is reason to despair.” But with equal prudence and delicacy, he has avoided explaining himself fully, or mentioning any particulars on so painful a subject. I should not wish to go very far in so unpleasant a discussion; but just that his delicate allusion may be in some measure understood, I shall mention

tion in the first place, in his own words, some of the signs and tokens of that *malignancy* and *criticism*.

“ He (Dr Gregory) never witnessed the severities of the Surgeon ; never strained hard his breath, nor involuntarily clenched his hands at the sight of another’s agony ; nor blanched with fear, nor felt the palpitations of anxiety, in the midst of an eventful operation ! Let a man feel the things he can feel, and his sensibilities will be applauded.” (Answer, page 7. line 15. 20).

Whether I am or am not subject to hysterics, and accustomed to exhibit the horrid grimaces thus beautifully described by Mr John Bell, is a question of no moment, either to the Managers or the public ; but it is right they should know, that such grimaces, and many significant looks, and nods, and shakes of the head, by the grand chorus, made a part of the tragedies performed in the theatre of this Hospital. But the chorus did not always confine itself to dumb shew : as in the Greek tragedies, it sometimes spoke out pretty plainly.

*Ille bonis faveatque et concilietur amicis,
Et regat iratos, et amet peccare timentes :
Ille tegat commissa, Deosque precetur et oret,
Ut redeat miseris, abeat fortuna superbis.*

I have heard of more than one instance of the principal performer finding it necessary to remonstrate, on the spot, in very strong terms, with some Members of the chorus. One Fellow of the Royal College assured me, that, the very first time he operated in that theatre, he met with that vexatious embarrassment, just when he was beginning a severe and dangerous operation on the eye. Some others have declared, without scruple, that such malignant criticisms as they were exposed to in that theatre, would,

of themselves, independently of all other considerations, have determined them to withdraw from the Hospital-duty.

One of the first articles of information that I received after my former Memorial was distributed, related to this point. A gentleman, no way connected with the Hospital, and not even of the Medical Profession, mentioned to me how much he was struck with the illustration of some of my general remarks, which he got from a student of Physic, in accidental conversation. This student mentioned having heard, in the operation-room, some of those malignant criticisms, delivered by the chorus, *alias* the consultation, in pretty audible whispers, in such terms as these, "He is too high; he is too low; too much to the right; too much to the left; he is always so," &c.

Such remarks must have been truly pleasant, and edifying, both to the operator and the patient, if the latter was in a condition to listen to them.

Soon afterwards, but yet several weeks before Mr John Bell's Answer to me came forth, I had the good fortune to get by anticipation a good commentary on the passage last quoted from it, and a full explanation of *the praise of friends, the malignancy of enemies, the observance and criticism*, which he mentions in such general and delicate terms, as well as of those horrid grimaces which he has condescended to describe more particularly. I was told, to my great edification, that it was well understood, that *the praise of friends*, expressed by words and signs, was the *price* or reward of a *vote* properly given; and that *the malignancy of enemies*, no less plainly expressed, was the sure punishment of a *vote* improperly given in the Royal College of Surgeons.

I do not however mean to insinuate, that the malignant criticisms alluded to by Mr John Bell, were *always unjust*: I have no doubt that very often they were but too well founded. Indeed the very first piece of intelligence I got, with respect to the *operation*

tion of my former Memorial, and this within two days after it had been distributed, was, that two different individuals had at once applied to themselves some of my general remarks, with respect to unskilfulness, and bad success in operations. Their conduct in so doing was rash and imprudent with respect to themselves, and uncandid with respect to me; who did not know of their misfortunes, and who, if I had known of them, would not have alluded to them: but certainly, their ready application of my remarks to themselves, could neither be *unjust* nor *erroneous*. Having no direct knowledge of the persons, characters, and events, to which I here allude, I cannot judge of the justness of an opinion, which I know has prevailed among several members of the Royal College of Surgeons; namely, that if it had not been for my unlucky remark, and the still more unlucky application of it, there would have been no dispute or lawsuit between the College as a body, and the Managers.

The parties in the College were very nearly balanced, fifteen of the Fellows being against, and fourteen for the Managers. If only one of those who so unluckily took to himself, and repented, my general remarks, had voted with our friends; which from certain considerations, of the validity of which I cannot judge, it was expected he would have done, we should then have had fifteen to fourteen in our favour. If both those gentlemen had voted with us, which however I believe was not just expected, on the principle of former connections and habits, we should have had sixteen to thirteen on our side, and consequently no lawsuit with their Royal College.

Mr John Bell deserves great credit, for the dexterity with which he has displayed his learning, and availed himself of the account that *Celsus* gives, of the age, the character, and the accomplish-

ments of body and mind befitting a Surgeon ; that he should be young, strong, and steady in his hand, ambidexter, with quick and sharp sight : but how it came to pass, that Mr John Bell ventured to give the conclusion of that amiable character, as drawn by *Celsus*, it is difficult to conceive ; unless it was, that he trusted to the quotation being given only in Latin, and not translated for the benefit of his readers. I beg leave to supply this omission, without taking the trouble to settle whether it was accidental or intended. The concluding part of that passage of *Celsus* quoted by Mr John Bell, relates to the mental accomplishments and disposition of a Surgeon, and is expressed in the following words ; *animo intrepidus, immisericors* : which literally translated mean, in disposition *fearless* and *merciless*. These amiable peculiarities could do little or no harm, when Surgeons were merely employed to execute the directions of Physicians, not to judge for themselves what was proper to be done ; but they are not quite so indifferent in this age and country, wherein Surgeons are not servants or slaves, employed to execute the directions of a superior or a master ; but expected to be men of liberal education, sentiments, and manners, and fit to judge as well as act for themselves. But it is unnecessary to discuss this point very fully, the principles on which it is to be decided being obvious to all. If Mr John Bell and his clients can persuade their countrymen at large, that it is for their good to entrust their limbs and their lives to Surgeons of such characters and accomplishments, and to whole corporations or colleges of them promiscuously, and by rotation, it would be a sin to balk them. I should only beg leave to tell them, what Frederick the Great King of Prussia told some of his subjects, who were like to tear one anothers eyes out in a dispute about the eternity of hell-torments, and at last referred the controversy to their Sovereign. His answer was short and simple : “ If my good subjects of Neufchatel are absolutely resolved to be damned to all eternity, I have

“ no

“ no objections.” (*Si mes bons sujets de Neufchatel veulent absolument etre damnè eternellement, je n’y trouve rien à redire.*)

But as long as the good people of Scotland, when acting for themselves and their families, take care to keep out of that purgatory which Mr John Bell so strongly recommends to them, I see no right or pretensions that they can have to put the sick poor into it. As to all those evils which Mr John Bell thinks he foresees from the selection of a few Surgeons for the Hospital-duty, I can see no probability, nay scarce a possibility, of any one of them. Every Surgeon in Edinburgh, just as much as at present, will be at liberty, and in duty bound, to give every one of his apprentices as many and as minute instructions on every point in surgery, as he thinks fit; every one of those apprentices will be entitled to attend the Hospital on the same terms as at present, to become acquainted with the case of every patient in it, and with the practical treatment of every case, and to see every operation that is performed. According to Mr John Bell’s own doctrine, of the certainty of the principles and the uniformity of the practice of surgery, and the equal and perfect accomplishments of every Surgeon who has the good fortune to be a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in this city, every such apprentice will see every such case treated as skilfully, and every operation performed as well as possible. I cannot for my heart conceive what more he would have for their sake. Their education will be as complete in every respect, as it has hitherto been; and I see no reason to think that their numbers will be lessened. As to the disappointment which some Surgeons may feel at not being allowed to exhibit their skill and dexterity in this Hospital, as on a public stage, it does not appear to me a point that ought to interest either the Managers or the public. The very notion of it strongly recalls to my memory a disappointment which *William*, Dr Monro’s purveyor, met with some twenty or five and twenty years ago, and lamented, in
very

very pathetic terms, to the great entertainment of our late worthy Principal, Dr Robertson. He declared, " It was the hardest case " in the world, after the Doctor " (for Dr Monro was always *the* Doctor) " had been at the expence of hiring a coach for him." The grievance was, that *William* was obliged to come back to Edinburgh without his agreeable though silent companion in a post-coach, who was actually under sentence of hanging at Stirling, but most unluckily got a reprieve.

Mr John Bell is pleased to say, (Section 3. page 43.), " The Memorialist never saw an operation ; and we are at some loss to guess what an ignorant person may imagine to be the consequences of an ill-performed operation ; but we, who have seen many operations, both good and bad, have seen none of those *murders*, which the Memorialist has more than hinted at."

As to my never having seen an operation, that point has been fully discussed already (page 123. 6. of this Memorial). As to my having more than hinted at *murders* in my former Memorial, no such hint or insinuation is to be found in it from end to end. This is one of the many matters of fact, about which he has been almost uniformly unlucky. By *murder* is always meant killing a person willfully and deliberately. But surely nothing of this kind was ever supposed by me, nor is there one word or sentence in my former Memorial that can bear such a construction. On the contrary, I had expressly, and in strong terms, declared my belief, that all the Surgeons attending in the Hospital, whether equal or unequal in professional knowledge, and manual dexterity as operators, did their best. My sentence expressing this opinion, " It is not the *fault* of a youth of four and twenty, that he has not all the useful knowledge, and manual dexterity, of an experienced Surgeon of fifty years of age," (*Mem. page 12.*) must have been

been well known to Mr John Bell, for he has quoted it repeatedly in his Answer to me, and made some curious remarks on it; in substance amounting to an assertion, that *it is the fault* of such a youth if he has not all these accomplishments. My observations and arguments were avowedly and uniformly directed against the general badness of that system of indiscriminate attendance by rotation of all the Surgeons in Edinburgh, which exposed the patients to so many evils and so great dangers: but I disclaimed, expressly and strongly, all thoughts of imputing even *blame*, not to say *murder*, to any one of them; or of proposing any inquiry into particular misfortunes, such as were known to have resulted from that system.

But let us consider what is to be understood by Mr John Bell's assertion, that he had seen none of those *murders*; only substituting, as Christian charity seems to require, the more decent terms of *evils* or *misfortunes*, instead of the horrid expression of *murders*. He acknowledges having seen many operations, both good and bad. Are we then to understand by his assertion, that all those operations were absolutely and indispensably necessary, and could not have been prevented by more judicious and skilful treatment of the same cases before they came to that last extremity? And are we to understand that all those operations which he saw, both good and bad, were uniformly successful? Such things may be asserted, but they cannot be believed. To suppose them even possible, is to suppose all the Surgeons of Edinburgh, not only equally skilful in the treatment of all chirurgical diseases, and equally dexterous in the performance of all operations; but moreover to suppose them all as skilful, and as dexterous, as Surgeons can be. This I conceive to be more than Mr John Bell has maintained in his Pamphlet, or will choose to maintain at present; especially with respect to that party, or *no* party, in their Royal College,

College, which has the wickedness to dissent from him and his friends.

Besides, it appears by some passages, already quoted from another of his works, that he had actually seen, and remembered, some of those misfortunes to which I alluded, but which I never dreamed of regarding as *murders*. The horrid experiment, (quoted page 273, 4. of this Memorial), of leaving all the sores of the patients in the Surgeons wards, for several days in the heat of summer, undressed, till they were all crawling with worms, was at least an *evil*; but would have been no *murder*, if it had been fatal to them all. The conduct of a grand consultation, in reversing one day the decision of another consultation only the day before, and *forcing* the attending Surgeon to cut off a limb, which it is plain he thought might have been saved, was another of those evils: yet though the patient died of that operation, it cannot be considered as *murder*, because it was not done with intention to kill. But with respect to the patients who lose their lives, or their limbs, it is much the same whether those evils are called misfortunes or murders: and it is equally the duty of the Managers, if it is in their power, to avert them from the patients in the Hospital.

Mr John Bell best knows whether he *saw* or even heard of any of those *evils*, or what he calls *murders*, to which it was rashly supposed that I had alluded in my former Memorial, by remarks which some gentlemen unluckily applied to themselves, and others more wisely, if not more candidly, applied to some of their professional brethren. But I can at least testify, that Mr John Bell was on one occasion present, and very attentive, not at an operation, but at the opening of the body of a patient on whom I had directed an operation to be performed. The operation was in itself neither difficult nor dangerous; yet in that case it appeared *indisputably*, that it had only been *attempted*, not *performed*; for that circumstance

stance which is essential to the operation, and for the sake of which the operation at that time was, and always is directed, had not been accomplished. Nay more, the attempt had been made so rudely and unskilfully, that a gangrene was induced in the wounded part, of such extent and depth, that it probably would have been fatal, if the patient had had no other disease. But, in this case, I fully acquit the operator of having been even the innocent cause of the patient's death; for it appeared plainly, on opening the body, that the patient's life could not have been saved: and I hope the Surgeon, who was so unfortunate on that occasion, will have the candour to acquit me, of being either the murderer in that case, or the innocent cause of the patient's death, by directing that operation. I certainly should not have done so, if I had known all that appeared so plainly after his death. I can only say, in my own vindication, that I wished to give the patient every possible chance for his life; that there was no danger in the operation, supposing it rightly performed; and that in the case, of all I have ever had under my care, that approached the nearest to that one, the patient had been saved by that very operation, when in circumstances of the utmost danger; indeed in such circumstances, that I am confident her life could not have been saved by any other means. In that unfortunate case to which I allude, it was known to all the Students attending the Clinical Lectures, as well as to me, that the operation had not *succeeded*; and all of us were curious to know, whether there had been any preternatural impediment to the right and effectual performing of it, or whether the failure was to be regarded merely as a *misfortune*. On this account, and also because the case was a very interesting one, both in the Theory and Practice of Physic, for I know but of *one* similar in the records of Medicine, an unusually great number of Students attended in the operation-room to see the body opened; and all of them saw that there was no peculiar impedi-

ment to the operation intended ; that it had *not* been performed, and had been very roughly and unskilfully attempted. Therefore, though this is a *medical fact*, I conceive it is one that cannot be disputed : and in particular, that it cannot be disputed by Mr John Bell ; who was not only present, and very attentive, at the opening of the body, but who even took, on the spot, a very sufficient memorandum of it, which I dare say he has in his repositories at this hour ; for the case was as interesting in Surgery as in Physic. Moreover, I think it impossible that he should have forgotten it, even at the time when he was writing his Answer to me ; for I had mentioned it particularly in my long letter to him, (20th August 1800), with many additional circumstances, which there is no occasion to state here. I even mentioned to him in that letter, the very pointed remark made upon it by Mr Chilver, a favourite pupil of Sir Walter Farquhar, and now an eminent Surgeon in London, who at that time attended my Clinical Lectures, and was at least as much astonished as I was at the failure of the operation which I had directed.

Such an example explains and illustrates, better than any general observations can do, what I wished to inculcate in my former Memorial. Relative to the Surgeon and the patient who were concerned in it, it was to be regarded merely as a misfortune ; but as relative to the general system, which exposed patients to such misfortunes, it was a proof of great badness ; and of a fault in the Managers of the Hospital, if they allowed such a system to continue, without using their utmost endeavours to get it abolished. It can scarce be necessary to point out, that if a patient's situation had been such, that his life might have been saved by that operation rightly performed, he would have lost that chance for his life, and would have been exposed to new and great danger, I mean from the mortification, by the unskilfulness of the operator. Nor is it very unreasonable, or uncharitable, to suppose, that an
operator,

operator, who was so unfortunate in a simple and easy operation, might be almost as unfortunate in those that are confessedly more difficult and dangerous. I have no doubt that he would profit by that misfortune, and would study the operation carefully, and learn to do it well, and actually perform it with complete success on the next patient on whom he had occasion to try it. Such I conceive to be a specimen of the improvement which Deacon Kennedy and his friends expected that young Surgeons were to acquire by practising in the Hospital: but I can conceive no right on the part of the Managers to make the patients in the Hospital the victims of such improvement; or any excuse for them if they do so, when they can get skilful and experienced Surgeons to do the Hospital-duty.

It surely required the utmost exertion of Mr John Bell's superior genius to discover, that, in the passage which he has *fairly* quoted from my Memorial, I had *threatened*, or, as he insinuates, had done worse than threatened, the oldest of the young Surgeons, or any other body. To *threaten*, means to denounce evil to a person, in order to deter him from doing something that is disagreeable to the person threatening, or to terrify him, so as to make him do something which that person wishes. But I, far from denouncing any evil to the oldest of the young Surgeons, or to any other body; far from endeavouring to terrify any person into doing what he did not choose, or endeavouring to deter any person from doing what he did choose; had very modestly expressed my humble hope, that the formidable Janus-headed Jonathan Dawplucker, Esq; might perform his office on me; and had declared, that I should consider it as a very great honour, and a particular favour. This declaration could not be distrusted; for I mentioned, explicitly and honestly, the reason for which I

was ambitious of that honour and favour; namely, that it would complete the evidence of all that I wish to establish, and give to the Managers of the Infirmary, and to the public, a just notion of the inveterate rancour of medical warfare. In this respect at least I have not been disappointed; for if the specimens which in my former Memorial I gave them of medical warfare, and if the writings that bear the name of Jonathan Dawplucker, Esq; to which I referred them, did not fully convince them of all that I wished them to know, Mr John Bell's Answer to me must have been more than sufficient to give them a just notion of medical controversy, and even some insight into a part of human nature, which otherwise they could have had no opportunity, and no wish to explore. In one kind of inveteracy, I admit, that controversial Divines surpass the most spirited of medical disputants: but in most, or all other respects, I conceive that Mr John Bell's pamphlet is equal to any thing that has appeared in theological controversy, from Saint Origen to Dr Priestley inclusive; and far beyond any thing that is to be met with in the writings of our keenest medical disputants.

It is easy, and it is worth while, to point out the general and most obvious causes of the inveteracy of medical disputes and medical disputants. The beginning of almost every medical dispute is some discovery or improvement, or pretended discovery and improvement, which some person of the medical profession conceives that he has made, and wishes to promulgate to the world. Even in *pure science*, such discoveries and improvements are often regarded with jealousy and envy by others engaged in the cultivation of the same sciences. They are mortifying to the pride of those who did not make them, and are considered as arrogant claims to superior talents and knowledge in the authors of them. Of such controversies, even within my memory, there have been some striking examples in the sciences of chemistry, of
politics,

politics, and of metaphysics. But phyfic and furgery are not *pure sciences*: they are *trades* or *crafts*, by which thofe who profefs them muft live. Of the numberlefs corrections and refutations, real or pretended, of old opinions and practices, and of the numberlefs new discoveries and improvements, real or pretended, which from time to time have been publifhed to the world, a very large proportion has evidently been intended to ferve the purpofe of the *craft*, by increafing the *trade* of thofe who propofed them, rather than to improve the ftate and to extend the limits of the fcience. That fuch is the cafe with the newspaper advertisements, and all kind of quack bills, and many little publications, in favour of particular medicines and practices, is well and generally known; and it is equally true, though not fo generally known, that the cafe often has been, and to this day often is, the fame, with many publications which appear in the form of handsome octavo or large quarto volumes. In the beft of thefe there is generally much credulity, and ftrong and glaring partiality to certain opinions and practices; but in many of them there is even great difingenuity, in fuppreffing what the authors muft have known to be true, and afferting what they muft have known to be falfe. Nor is this kind of difingenuity confined to thofe who begin the attack; I mean to the authors of real or pretended discoveries and improvements. Some of thefe, pretty far advanced in life, and long eftablifhed in practice, have been juft as long the professional rivals, and often the bitter perfonal enemies, of their brethren and cotemporaries. Others of them are young men, not yet known to the world; but eager to become fo, and to fhew the world how far fuperior they are to their elder brethren in talents and professional knowledge, and how far more worthy of public efteem and confidence, and of great and lucrative employment.

Thofe who are attacked on this very tender point, cannot be expected to be much more candid and impartial than thofe who attack

tack them. Physicians and Surgeons depend, not only for prosperity in their professions, but for their daily bread, on their professional character; which is necessarily estimated by a kind of comparison, always invidious, with the character of their brethren. If any of them were to admit the claims of their assuming brethren, whether their cotemporaries or juniors, to superior skill and knowledge, it would be almost equivalent to giving all that they had to their most hated rivals and bitterest enemies. Professional character is to a Physician or Surgeon, what a tongue is to a lawyer, fingers to a fiddler, or feet to a dancing-master: it is his landed estate, his bank-stock, his India bonds, his 3 per cent. consols, his skill in jockeyship, his feat in parliament, his knowledge of play, his scrip, his omnium; and he must fight for it to the last. If only half a quarter of a yard were snipped off from the point of a lawyer's tongue, every time that he undertook a bad cause, or employed a bad argument in maintaining a good one, the world would soon hear such an outcry as never yet was heard; and I have no doubt that the gentlemen of the long robe, who have long been accustomed to dispute and wrangle with one another all their days, with great candour and good humour, would soon become as illiberal and inveterate in their disputes as the worst of my brethren. Medical disputants are but men, neither better nor worse than other men; but placed in very trying and unfavourable circumstances. Of this many of the Medical Profession have been so well convinced, that no temptation, or provocation, could ever induce them to engage in a medical controversy.

Some of our medical disputants have really been men of talents, of science, of wit: and have had all the advantages which a liberal and learned education could give them: so that it is not surprising that their controversial writings have been just and severe, as well as acute, lively, and entertaining. But unfortunately many more of our disputants, who had none of these advantages, have been
pleased

pleased to take it into what they call their heads, that they possess them all in the highest degree. To this unlucky mistake we owe an infinite number of volumes, the hundredth part of which would be much more than sufficient to give all mankind a surfeit of our writings and our controversies.

It is unnecessary here to give any specimens of what every person of taste and judgment must acknowledge to be vile and detestable in medical controversy. But I shall give, from the writings of our celebrated countryman *Dr Pitcairn*, one little specimen of the spirit, the inveteracy, the contempt, and even the ribaldry and abuse, with which a keen medical disputant can treat his opponent.

Astruc, a famous French physician near a hundred years ago, had got into a dispute about the circulation of the blood, some things relating to which he either could not or would not understand. He seems even to have gone so far wrong, as to admit that the fibres of the cavities of the heart might contract, but yet to deny that by such contraction they could compress, or propel, the blood contained in those cavities. To such a heresy *Pitcairn* could give no quarter; and, though perfectly able for the task himself, gravely asked the opinion of the Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh with respect to it; a James Gregory, not one of my dynasty, but one of the three brothers of the collateral dynasty. He, on considering *Astruc's* argument, pronounced with confidence, as well he might, that if a circular fibre surrounding a cavity, contracted, not only it must compress whatever was contained in that cavity; but that, if it contracted to half its original length, it must compress whatever was between it and the centre of the cavity into the fourth part of its former space. Not content with this schooling, he proceeds to give a burlesque demonstration of *Astruc's* doctrine, but good enough, as he thought, for *Astruc*.

This,

This, it might have been thought, would have satisfied the keenest disputant: but it did not satisfy *Pitcairn*, who thought it necessary to administer some farther flagellation to *Astruc*, in his own peculiar style; and accordingly, after quoting the words of my namesake, thus proceeds.

“ *Hæc mens Gregorius.*

Ego libellum Astrucii non vocem Annales Volusi, sive cacatam chartam, quia mihi videtur Astrucius nunquam cacasse, alioquin sensisset musculos abdominis et se contrahere, et alia exprimere posse.”

Happily it is impossible to translate *Pitcairn*'s sentence: but every person who understands the language and the allusion of it, must be sensible that it is impossible to estimate more contemptuously the talents and knowledge of an adversary. But those medical disputants, who naturally burn with a desire to emulate what they cannot fail to admire, and who have really the finest talents for blackguard abuse, may be assured that it is in vain for them to expect the same admiration of their ribaldry, unless it comes adorned, recommended, and enforced, by some portion of that acuteness, and sound reasoning, and real wit, which *Pitcairn* displayed. (See the Prefatory Epistle to *Pitcairni Dissertationes Medicæ*, 4to Edin. edition, 1713).

Supposing, however contrary to the plain meaning of words as plain as any in the English language, that my innocent compliment to Jonathan Dawplucker, Esq; was *bona fide* a threat, and by me intended as such, if not as something worse, a still greater difficulty and subject of astonishment remains, namely, how such a compliment, or threat, to Jonathan Dawplucker, Esq; can be a threat to the oldest of the young Surgeons.

The first step in this most interesting inquiry is, to ascertain who is the oldest of the young Surgeons. Happily for all concerned,

cerned, Mr John Bell has had the goodness to give us great assistance on this point. In the very beginning of his pamphlet, or what may be reckoned a preface and introduction to it, he tells us, that “ the following request was presented to Mr Bell, as the “ oldest of the Junior Surgeons.” Every body must be sensible of his great delicacy in attributing to that accidental circumstance alone, the very honourable compliment that one party of his brethren paid him, in requesting him to draw up an Answer to my Memorial. This mode of stating the fact must certainly be attributed to his extraordinary modesty; for every person but himself would have said without hesitation, that he was employed by his party to write for them, not in consideration of his being the oldest of the Junior Surgeons, but in consideration of the undisputed superiority of his talents, and his great and acknowledged merit as a controversial writer. Indeed some evil-minded persons went so far as to say, that he was the only one of the party who could write; but this must not be understood literally. All that I can understand or believe on that point is, that none of his party could have written nearly so well as he has done, or would have been trusted by the party to write for them, on an occasion at once so delicate and so important.

Whatever may be thought of these speculations, it must at least remain certain, either that Mr John Bell, the oldest of the young Surgeons, is Jonathan Dawplucker, Esquire, or at least that he wishes to be thought so. The latter supposition being unfavourable to Mr John Bell, as implying a wish on his part to have the credit of writings not his own, but very generally and justly admired, may be set aside at once, without any minute examination. We have then to consider only the other part of the alternative, that he really is, as his words imply, the author of those admirable works which bear the name of Jonathan Dawplucker. On considering again and again his words, in the very interesting

marginal note at present under review, I cannot perceive that he has made any distinction between the two publications which equally bear that formidable name. Are we then to consider him as the author of them both? or will he in due time, and in his own way, favour the world with a luminous commentary on his own text? This I conceive will at least be acceptable to the world, and will even be wanted for the instruction and conviction of many well-meaning but dull plodding people, who do not understand men of genius and their ways, and always insist upon judging them by common rules. There is no doubt something very engaging in that kind of mystery and coquetry which Mr John Bell has so artfully employed, in half showing half concealing that he is the great Jonathan Dawplucker; *et fugit ad salices et se cupit ante videri*. Many readers will always be gratified by finding something left to their own genius, imagination, and industry: they must no doubt consider it as a compliment to their sagacity, to get but a hint, a pretty broad one, I must confess, in the present instance, and to be allowed to find out the rest for themselves. Possibly too Mr John Bell has had some other reasons for not choosing to say explicitly that he was the writer of all or even of some of those works which bear the name of Jonathan Dawplucker. But if he will only consider how wofully his readers and admirers must be puzzled and bewildered by his reserve and obscurity on that interesting point, I trust he will have pity on them, and put an end to their doubts and their pain, by enlightening their understanding. This surely he can best do, *diem qui promit et celat, aliusque et idem nascitur*.

The chief difficulty that many of them feel, is to conceive how any man, not furiously insane, should attack, and dissect, and anatomise himself, with such unrelenting inveteracy, as Mr John Bell has displayed in both those works to which I allude. It is a common opinion, but a very gross mistake, that it is only in the first
of

of Jonathan Dawplucker's works that Mr John Bell is so roughly handled. The same inveteracy against him appears in the second of them, even in the dedication of it to Mr Benjamin Bell; which appears to have been most unaccountably overlooked: For example, " When this bloody-minded man troubled the College, (of which
 " you very naturally consider yourself and your copartners as constituting a majority, or at least a quorum, *tres faciunt collegium*) ;
 " when he began to disturb the College with his johnbellations,
 " why did you not let him go on quietly? I can assure you he
 " is no more fit than yourself to institute a literary society, and
 " far less to create one out of nothing! You should have let
 " him " Go on," and left it to me to show how much he is a
 " dunce in science, a pretender in anatomy, a puppy in surgery,
 " and a plagiarist in every thing. Was it wisely done to set your
 " Hall on fire, in order to drive out a few vermin? He and those
 " who have joined him are a set of self-sufficient ignorant boys,
 " not equal besides in number to the partners of your own firm.
 " If they have contradicted you, it must have been from mere
 " conceit, vanity, and idleness! " They are idle, they are idle,
 " and therefore do they say, Let us go to sacrifice to our gods." "

This, to the best of my judgment, is just the sum and substance of what is contained in the first of Jonathan Dawplucker's pamphlets.

I already hinted, that it is a vulgar error, to attempt to estimate men of genius, and their actions, by common rules. Certainly no man but one of superior genius would have thought of acquiring distinction, and of recommending himself to the favour and confidence of the public, by such an unmerciful dissection of himself, as that one of Mr John Bell contained in the pamphlet, which explains, with such acuteness and logical accuracy, the whole craft and mystery, and all the *genera* and *species*, of the great and new art of johnbellation. I must own I think there was a degree of vanity in giving it this name, not quite consistent with his exemplary

modesty on all other occasions. Perhaps he thought his great candour, and perfect veracity in all that he said with respect to himself, might excuse that appearance of vanity, in endeavouring by such an innocent expedient to make his name immortal. It must be observed, that this mode of attracting notice, and gaining esteem and confidence, though uncommon, is not absolutely without example even in this age and country. Within my memory a famous popular preacher soon gained the esteem and confidence of his congregation, by telling them, from the pulpit, that from his youth upwards he had been sadly addicted to lying. It was evidently impossible for such a man to fail in his attempt: if his hearers were not stocks or stones, they must have believed and esteemed him.

In some other countries it has been the practice, time immemorial, for certain individuals of superior genius, to raise themselves to eminence, and to acquire great influence over their countrymen, by inflicting on their own persons the most unmerciful torments, by way of penance. Thus, in Hindostan, they reckon at least a million and a half, some say two millions, of such fellows, whom they call Faquirs. I remember to have read of one of these worthies, who became a very great man by the simple expedient of driving ten-penny nails into his breech. I do not wish here to make or to insinuate any malicious comparisons: I take it for granted, that not one in fifty of those self-tormenting Faquirs is equal, or nearly equal, in genius to Mr John Bell: yet surely even the dullest of them may be reckoned infinitely superior in talents to the simple Hindoos who believe in them. Every body knows, that in Popish countries, to this day, many people acquire the reputation of superior sanctity, and are even supposed to obtain miraculous powers, by the unceasing penances which they perform. I know not how early this practice began in the Christian Church: but certainly as early as the third century it was well understood.

Early

Early in that century the great Saint Origen flourished: and though, by his superior genius, and his unparalleled inveteracy in disputes, and his being a little crack-brained, he must easily have been at the head of one party in the church; yet not content with that kind of greatness, by employing a well-judged penance on his own person, he acquired at once unrivalled eminence. Understanding, or pretending to understand, literally, a certain text of Scripture, (Matth. xix. 12.), which the most orthodox divines of all Christian churches have agreed in considering as metaphorical, he performed on his own person a little surgical operation, a mere scratch, a flea-bite, in comparison of the terrible dissecting and anatomising which Mr John Bell, under the borrowed name of Jonathan Dawplucker, has performed on himself: and so well did he succeed by it, that his reward was great as his utmost wish. He had the pleasure of living in perpetual warfare with all his brethren, and at last of receiving the crown of martyrdom; nay, to this day, his writings are often quoted by keen theological disputants. *Omne tulit punctum*. If Mr John Bell really wishes to be regarded as the Saint Origen of medical disputants, which, from the marginal note in his Answer to me, and the whole tenor of the first, and the dedication of the second of Jonathan Dawplucker's pamphlets, seems to be the case, no body can have any objections: but if that be not his meaning, and if all those writings, and notes, and hints, are to be regarded only as a Harlequinade, I humbly think it is almost time that he should make an end of that cruel self-dissection, and put himself neatly together again, *secundum artem*; for I am sure that many of his best friends must long have been in pain for him. Very little will be wanted to accomplish this healing process: nothing more or less, but just to show that the quotations from his own writings given as true in Jonathan Dawplucker's first pamphlet, and by the malevolent vulgar believed to be so, are all false, as well as the

short

short and pithy character given of himself in the dedication of Dawplucker's second pamphlet. This I am sure it will be as easy for him to do, as to show that those quotations from my Memorial are fair and true, with which he has so liberally favoured the world.

I must not deprive Mr John Bellof the pleasure of knowing that he succeeded perfectly in *quizzing* me, by what he had hinted of the attacks made on his character, and of what he had done in self-defence. Not suspecting that there could be any trick or deceit in that part of his letter, printed page 35. of this Memorial, I *bona fide* applied to several booksellers for a copy of his defence, or answer to the pamphlet of Jonathan Dawplucker, Esquire: but none of them had ever seen or heard of such a defence or answer, so that I am well convinced none such ever was published. What is very curious, most or all of them mentioned to me Jonathan Dawplucker's second pamphlet, as what they understood to be Mr John Bell's defence or answer to the first. But that must have been a mistake; for, in the first place, it contains (as already quoted, page 299.) instead of a contradiction or refutation, a brief recapitulation and enforcement of every thing unfavourable to Mr John Bell, which had been said of him in Dawplucker's first Pamphlet: and in the second place, the whole body of the Pamphlet is filled with the most virulent abuse of Mr Benjamin Bell; which I conceive to be well merited, and well bestowed on the said Benjamin Bell, as being a kind of income-tax, more equitably assessed, and more rigorously exacted, than ever Mr Pitt's was. It is indeed so fair and reasonable a tax, that I think he ought to pay it without murmuring, every year, as long as he lives.

I must also do Mr John Bell the justice to say, that he has shown himself thoroughly master of the English language, by the very perfect manner in which he has disguised his own peculiar style, and assumed one diametrically opposite to it, in the former of the

two Pamphlets published under the borrowed name of Jonathan Dawplucker. In most or all of his other works, he writes with peculiar ease and elegance; in every page, and in almost every sentence, snatching a grace beyond the reach of art. But in Jonathan Dawplucker's first pamphlet no such grace or elegance can be perceived: it is evident in the whole of it,

*That rules as strict his labour'd work confine,
As if the Staggyrite o'erlook'd each line.*

I doubt whether there be in the whole of it the smallest deviation from the vulgar rules of grammar: and certainly the whole of it is written with a degree of dryness, little if at all inferior to that of Gulliver's Travels, or Swift's Advice to the people of Ireland to eat their own children. That dry style has at different times been in fashion; as for example, in England about one hundred, and in Rome about eighteen hundred years ago; and in Athens for some hundred years before. Some readers as well as writers of bad taste have affected to admire it greatly, and have called it classical: but it has always soon gone into disrepute, and been reprobated by the general voice of mankind; who never fail to tire of it, and to be delighted with the very opposite style, such as Mr John Bell has employed in his Answer to me. If this Answer had been written in the same dry style with Jonathan Dawplucker's first pamphlet, the studying and dissecting of it, instead of being an agreeable amusement, would have been to me an irksome and insupportable labour.

Towards the conclusion of his pamphlet, (section 3. p. 49. and 50.) Mr John Bell takes his leave of me, in a strain of the most animated eloquence; to which it would be doing great injustice

justice were I to give only a few sentences or extracts from it, by way of sample. I shall therefore transcribe it *verbatim et literatim*, not forgetting the marginal notes with which it is enriched and adorned: for these notes are of equal authority with the text, and contain matters much more interesting even than the text itself. I put, as on a former occasion, numbers on the margin of this long quotation, for the sake of precise reference to the several parts of it, considered in their proper connection with the whole.

“ Of the Memorialist we shall also take our leave, though in terms less fervent or respectful. The ceremonial of taking leave must be complied with: his talents, his professional reputation, his literary achievements, his station in the University, require all due observance. “ His genius for quarrelling with his professional brethren” is the natural subject of our valedictory address; the share of this very peculiar talent which he has been pleased to bestow on us and our private matters, ensures to him this last mark of our regard.

“ Conscious that he had said such things as young men of spirit could never endure, he has taken precautions not unworthy of his genius; and tried, by a curious anticipation, to take off the effect of our just reproaches.”

To this part of his text is subjoined the following marginal note; the first lines of which are a faithful transcript from my own Memorial, and the last lines contain his very interesting observation on my words.

“ *Perhaps the formidable Janus-headed Jonathan Dawplucker, Esq; notwithstanding his former kindness to me, and all the civil and kind things which I have said of him and his books, will officiate as high priest, and from his two mouths will thunder forth the direful sentence, and with his own four hands begin the sacrifice, by plucking me as bare as a fish. This I shall consider as a very great honour, and a particular favour; for it will complete the evidence of all*
“ *that*

“ *that I wish to establish, and give to the Managers of this Infirmary,*
 “ *and to the Public, a just notion of the inveterate rancour of medical*
 “ *hatred.*” These are the terms in which the Memorialist threatens (not to use any coarser expression), the OLDEST OF THE
 “ YOUNG SURGEONS, whose natural duty it was to stand forward
 “ in the general cause.” His text then proceeds as follows :

“ The public and avowed disapprobation of a whole college,
 “ he has imputed to the resentment of one man, who, though he
 “ once stood forth in self-defence when his own reputation was
 “ attacked by anonymous pamphlets, had no quarrel with the Me-
 “ morialist, whom he never feared nor hated ! nor hates nor
 “ fears.

“ Our Memorialist, ill contented with this great exertion of his
 “ peculiar talent ! sensible of an imperfection in his work, while he
 “ has attained only to a general quarrel, fastens his quarrel at last
 “ on this person, and persecutes him with such praise as his nature
 “ will allow him to bestow. He calls him the head of our party !
 “ a cunning compliment ; he calls him the Junius and the Janus
 “ of medical literature ! an ironical compliment ; he describes
 “ him as the most turbulent man of a turbulent society ! a selfish
 “ compliment ; since it reminds us of that boasted accomplishment
 “ in which the Memorialist himself never was excelled, and recalls
 “ the memory of his own quarrels, numberless and nameless,
 “ Lordly †, Literary, and Obstetrical ! Metaphysical, Polemical,
 “ Surgical, and Moral too ! for how can such a man, when he
 “ quarrels with all good men, escape quarrelling sometimes “ on a
 “ moral cause !” But we leave the unwearied Memorialist to com-
 “ plete the work he delights in, and finish the particular quarrel
 “ he has so happily begun.” Subjoined to this passage, by a mark
 of reference at the word *Lordly*, is the following marginal note.

“ The Memorialist insinuates, that his quarrels are only pro-
 Q q “ feSSIONAL

“ fessional quarrels ; but tho’ he cajoles the Bar, he quarrels with the Bench.”

The latter part of this short note, “ tho’ he cajoles the bar, he quarrels with the bench,” I have not the honour to understand ; and therefore I shall not attempt to make any particular observations on it. The former part of the note, about my *insinuating* that my quarrels are only *professional* quarrels, I understand perfectly, and admire greatly. It is equal to almost any of the specimens hitherto considered, of Mr John Bell’s talents as an orator and a lawyer. As it related to a *matter of fact*, which must have been perfectly well known to him, his usual bad luck with respect to all such matters of course attended him in the stating of it. Far from having ever insinuated, or said, or thought, that my quarrels were only professional quarrels, I had expressed fully, and in the strongest possible terms, the direct contrary ; and had even mentioned my reasons for having carefully avoided all professional quarrels. Of these truths, every person may convince himself at once, by perusing the 222d and 223d pages of my former Memorial. There is peculiar merit in Mr John Bell’s mode of stating that fact ; for it appears from his own Pamphlet, (Section 1st, page 40th), that he had read and understood that part of my Memorial : nay, he has even quoted *fairly* my own words, expressing, that without even the pretence of any difference in medical opinions, and purely on account of certain differences in morality, I had quarrelled irreconcilably with some of my brethren, and refused ever again to consult with them.

These things being abundantly well known, I thought it right, in my former Memorial, to mention, briefly and generally, what had been the nature and subject of those quarrels in which I had been engaged ; as I was almost certain that they would be misrepresented, and that I should be reproached with them, as if they had been professional disputes or quarrels ; of which, as occurring in
others,

others, I had occasion, for the purposes of my former Memorial, to give some account, and to express my abhorrence and contempt. But though I regard *medical quarrels* as ridiculous and disgraceful, I conceive that there may be such immoralities in the conduct of Physicians or Surgeons, that their professional Brethren may not only be justified in renouncing all intercourse with them, but can scarce be justified if they do not act in this decisive manner.

It is difficult even to guess, what purpose Mr John Bell's determined misrepresentation of my meaning and of my words is intended to serve. I do not see that he attempts to make any use of it; and I therefore consider it as introduced only to display his own peculiar talents: just like the spirited Voluntary, totally unconnected with every part of the Church service, which an expert organist performs to amuse a congregation, and shew his own powers of composition and execution. There are several other *voluntaries*, seemingly of the same kind, in Mr John Bell's answer to me: some of which have been already considered. One more of them, as a matter of curiosity, deserves to be pointed out. In his 2d section, page 21, line 24, he is pleased to say: "And our memorialist has been so unwise as to repeat the lines, *Non facile emergunt quorum virtutibus obstat res angusta domi*. It is of us he speaks: we thank him for the compliment, and shall strive to do away the reproach."

Mr John Bell's usual bad luck with respect to all matters of fact has attended him on this occasion. In my former Memorial I had *not repeated* (nor *quoted*, which, I presume, is what he means by *repeated*) that well known passage of one of Juvenal's Satires; nor even one word of it: as he must have known perfectly. It is therefore himself alone, not me, that he and his clients have to thank both for the compliment and the reproach to themselves, which he pretends to discover in those words of the Roman Satirist. But, for my part, I must own that I am so dull, that, even with the

help of his very broad hint, I can perceive neither reproach, nor compliment, nor any the most distant allusion to Mr John Bell or his clients in that passage of Juvenal's third satire, which he, not I, has quoted.

The only passage, in my former Memorial, that I can think of, which can be supposed to have recalled to any person's memory Juvenal's sentiment, though certainly it expresses a very different thought, is the following sentence: " Modest merit, from unfavourable circumstances, may pine, from youth to age, in obscurity, contempt, and poverty." But surely even this passage neither is, nor can it be construed to be, either a reproach, or a compliment, or any kind of allusion to Mr John Bell and his clients. I am sure when I wrote it I was not thinking either of him or of them: nor can I well conceive how any human skull can be so roomy as to receive and accommodate at once such incongruous and discordant thoughts. I can scarce think that he himself, or that any of them, should suppose, and I am sure at least that no other body could suppose, that I meant to say, that *res angusta domi* always or generally made a person unsuccessful in any branch of the medical profession: for it is too notorious to require any proof, that very few indeed, certainly not one in a hundred, of Physicians or Surgeons, have attained eminence and affluence, or even independence and comfort, by their respective professions, who had not poverty at first to force them to persevering exertions. As little surely can it be supposed that I meant to say, that *modest merit* precluded success in physic or surgery; or that none were unsuccessful but men of *modest merit*. I had strongly expressed my belief, that the most eminent Surgeons in Edinburgh, who enjoyed the greatest share of public esteem and confidence, and had been the most successful in their profession, were really men of merit, probably of the greatest merit, and well entitled to that high estimation which they had attained. So strongly had I expressed this opinion, as thereby to give offence to

Mr

Mr John Bell, who, in his Answer to me, has made some curious but pretty severe animadversions on it: For example, in the 36th page of his second section, where having taken occasion to mention, but without naming them, “ the three first Surgeons of the “ city,” he adds this short and pithy commentary: “ Superior “ to us, not in professional acquirements, but in that accumu- “ lation of the gains and emoluments of our profession, which is “ so often obtained by means which good men despise.”—*At, at; hoc illud est; hinc illæ lachrymæ; hæc illa est misericordia.*—As to any supposition, that I meant to say or insinuate that none were unsuccessful but men of *modest merit*, it is, in the first place, too absurd to need any discussion; and, in the second place, it is directly repugnant to matter of fact. In every city, and within my memory repeatedly in this city, there have been instances, so well known, that it would be equally needless and indelicate to mention them particularly, of men, whose character was just the reverse of *modest merit*, who yet were completely unsuccessful as Surgeons. I have no doubt that Mr John Bell, even from this very general description, could easily name one of the individuals to whom I allude; a man whose life and death were so remarkable and instructive that they should never be forgotten: were it only, that all who imitate his conduct may be warned by his example.

I cannot guess what Mr John Bell means by my *lordly* quarrels; for, to the best of my remembrance, I never had the honour of any quarrel with any Lord; nor do I know what he means by my *polemical* quarrels. Polemical quarrels, or controversies, or disputes, seem to me to be somewhat like wooden timber, vegetable grafts, or marine seas: Controversial and polemical, the one originally a Latin, the other a Greek word, I take to mean the same thing. My literary and metaphysical quarrels must answer for themselves. I can guess what he means by my *obstetrical* quarrels: but certainly his expression could never convey to one, not
already

already acquainted with the fact to which he alludes, any the smallest notion of what it was ; on the contrary, his brief expression would convey a totally different meaning, and one abundantly absurd and disgraceful to me. Any person, informed that I had been engaged in an obstetrical quarrel, would certainly understand, that I had differed in opinion on some point in Midwifery from some practitioner of that noble art ; and that this difference in opinion had become a violent dispute or controversy, and at last an open quarrel ; which certainly would have been completely ridiculous in me. But it is well known to thousands, and to no body better than to Mr John Bell himself, that the only quarrel of mine, to which in the passage quoted he can allude, bore no relation whatever to any opinion or practice in Midwifery, and was purely on a moral cause. It was indeed with a Knight of the noble order of the Crotchet ; but that surely could no more entitle it to be called an obstetrical quarrel, than a dispute with a clergyman or a lawyer, a soldier or a merchant, is entitled to be called a theological or a legal, a mercantile or a military quarrel. The subject of it was a knavish pamphlet, published under a false name ; and plainly intended to promote the pecuniary interest of one man, and to injure the fame and fortune of another, both of them my colleagues in this University. From an accidental, but very striking combination of circumstances, I was led to believe that I could completely detect, and bring to condign punishment, the author of that vile piece of knavery : and this I thought the honour and interest of the University required to be done. Though baffled in this attempt, and even in the preliminary step towards it, the prevailing on my colleagues of the University to engage in that enquiry, I was abundantly successful in another attempt that I made, in the way that I thought best, to prevail on the author of that pamphlet to *expose himself*. Having had the agreeable surprise, (even while the preliminary question about engaging in the

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the inquiry was yet pending in the *Senatus Academicus*), to receive a letter from the author of the pamphlet, still using his false name of J. Johnson, in which he exerted all his eloquence and talents to *dissuade* and *deter* me from urging that inquiry which I had proposed; having also by that time got some valuable additional information about the said pamphlet, and its birth and parentage; no less indeed than that one of the supposed or suspected authors of it had intimated to one of his acquaintance, (the late Dr Adair junior), that he should soon see a publication of his, but without his name; that a few days afterwards, but near a month before it was published here, he put into the hands of Dr Adair a copy of the ill-fated pamphlet; that Dr Adair recognised in it the sentiments, and even some of the expressions which he had several times heard from that person; that afterwards he took occasion to tell Dr A. that he had been accused of being the author of the pamphlet; that he was much hurt with the imputation, and begged Dr A. to contradict it, if ever he heard it mentioned; that Dr A. advised him to do this in a much more effectual way, by applying to the real author, through the medium of the London publishers of the pamphlet, and getting him to declare himself; that he had declined to do this, for very curious reasons, insinuating, that another person, whom he named, had also been suspected of having written the pamphlet, insinuating even that his own father, nay that he himself was in some measure concerned in it, "that the author might possibly have received some
 " hints respecting that publication, from his father or himself, by
 " means of some information which had been conveyed to a friend
 " in London," &c. &c. Having thus acquired almost certain knowledge that he was either the author of the pamphlet, or at least privy and accessory to it, I thought it worth while to try to make him give further evidence against himself, even without knowing it. With this charitable intention, I wrote him, by way
 of

of answer to his unexpected favour, such a letter as no human being ever before wrote to another. My letter was committed to the care of his London publishers, who, I was sure, would forward it, directly or indirectly, to the proper person: and he, I was pretty sure, could not suspect the real purpose of it; which was to provoke him to some absurd and extravagant explosion, which, instead of removing the suspicion that he complained of, might confirm it for ever, and make him generally and indisputably known as the author of the pamphlet. After a delay of a few days longer than I expected, but which was afterwards *fully and precisely* accounted for, the explosion took place in the very person in whom I intended and expected to produce it; and at the very moment when it began, I received a second letter from J. Johnson, Esq; in which he vowed all manner of vengeance against me, but in the mean time gave me complete evidence that he *had* received my letter, and that he *had not* suspected the purpose of it.

All these things, of course, I took care to explain very fully and publicly: and in due time I was favoured with a most edifying reply to my publication; such a reply as did not seem to need any rejoinder from me: for bad as things were before, it made them rather worse. But there is one point in it which it is now full time to explain, just to put an end to the horrible feelings and apprehensions with which the author of it and his friends have been tormented for near ten long years.

Conceiving, I know not why, that it would serve his cause, and at least render me odious, to make it be believed that my *Answer* to him, and to his appeal to the public, was to have been published, *whether his Appeal or explosion had been made or not*, conceiving also, very rightly, as it appeared, that some people would believe such an absurdity, in his Reply to me, he hazards some such apostrophe as this: (for not having his Pamphlet at hand, I quote
from

from memory): "What must be the feelings of the reader, when he knows that his (Dr Gregory's) pamphlet was actually in the press before my letters were written," or something to this effect.

The feelings of his readers, as well as his own, must indeed have been most awful: full of sublime horror. My pamphlet contained the most precise reference to his publication; and there is much difficulty in conceiving how I could write with such certain reference to another person's work not then written, on any supposition but one, and this one so plain and obvious, that it must instantly have occurred to every person who had faith enough to believe his assertion; and of course to himself, if he believed it: the supposition is only, that I had sold myself to the Devil, and from him had learned exactly what that ill fated author was to write. That point being ascertained, it followed plainly, by necessary consequence, that the devil must come to take me away, as he did Dr Faustus, the very moment that the term expires, for which I had bargained. Every body knows that ten years is the longest term that he ever gives in such bargains: and as this term is now almost expired, J. Johnson, Esq; and his friends must all be waiting in trembling hope of seeing me carried off in a grand style. But that no unreasonable hopes, or groundless fears, may be entertained on my account, I think it right to declare that I have no pretensions either to such preternatural knowledge, or to such a splendid exit from this world. Far from attempting, or thinking it possible, to write and print an answer to letters that were not then written, and might never have been written, I was humbly content with a plan of publishing certain "*Letters to and from J. Johnson, Esq;*" including of course my curious letter to him. This, which concerned only the said J. Johnson and myself, his good friend had heard of; probably by tampering with some of the printer's people; and being unable to distinguish between himself and J. Johnson, Esq;

supposed it was an answer to himself. As he could not, even **when it** most concerned him, make that nice distinction, he certainly cannot complain of other people for not making it. I shrewdly *suspect* that he had got that valuable intelligence, and of course got into that unlucky puzzle, *a few weeks sooner* than he is pleased to acknowledge; that is, *before*, not *after* his explosion took place; and that the **dread** of seeing those letters (especially my curious one) in print, and his commendable eagerness to have the first fire, contributed **not** a little to produce the said explosion. The simple perusal of that letter of mine, will go very near to settle this point at once: and if he or J. Johnson, Esq; choose to print it, I consent to be judged by it; and engage even to give him a copy of his reply, (his second letter to me), to be printed along with it. That reply, as well as my own letter to him, were suppressed, for certain reasons, in my answer to the explosion; but if he still thinks that I have done him any injustice in that controversy, particularly in suppressing those two most edifying letters, the first of which, if erroneous in any respect, would have been **conclusive evidence against** myself, and the second of which, if **true in any** respect, would have been a *complete vindication* of him, **he is** heartily welcome to publish them both. There can be no dispute about the authenticity of my letter to J. Johnson, Esq; for it is in my own hand-writing; and in his second letter, he acknowledged having received it. Further, I engage, as soon as he or his dear friend shall publish that letter, to point out, in the *explosion* itself, certain allusions to it: and such allusions as cannot be understood, or explained, or accounted for, on the supposition of accidental coincidence, or on any supposition but that of my letter having, directly or indirectly, reached the person for whom it was intended, and his answer to it having reached me, in a *very few days more* than the time necessary, in the regular course of post, for the letters in question to perform *all their destined travels*, between Edinburgh and London.

Lastly,

Lastly, whenever that precious letter of mine shall be given to the public, I engage to shew, that between the day when the latter part of my letter was dispatched from Edinburgh, and the day when the explosion began, there was *time* for *my* letter to have gone from Edinburgh to London, from London to Bath, and back again from Bath to London and Edinburgh, so as to coincide with all the other circumstances of the said explosion, which I firmly believe to have been produced by it. This point I took special care to ascertain, first, by enquiry at the Post Office, secondly, by *actual experiment*, (writing to a friend who was in the neighbourhood of Bath, and getting his answer in course of post), because it was strongly maintained in the *Reply* to my account of that business, that *one* of the copartnery of the London booksellers, to whose care my letter had been directed, was then at Bath, and that there was not time for my letter to have gone to Bath, and to have returned to Edinburgh, in time to have produced the explosion. The coincidence in that circumstance, as in every other, was perfect. Such was the nature of that literary fox-chace, to which Mr John Bell is pleased to allude, as an *obstetrical* quarrel of mine.

But whatever reasons I have for thinking unfavourably of the understanding and morals of one male practitioner of Midwifery, I never did nor could extend that unfavourable opinion to all others of the same profession. If this had been possible, it would have been just as absurd, as it would be to extend, by the power of fancy, the good opinion which I entertain of some individuals of every profession, to all others of the same professions: and withal, it would be most uncharitable and unjust. I should be very sorry indeed, to be supposed capable of thinking and acting in a manner at once so irrational and illiberal: and I should be still more sorry, to be thought capable of the folly of remonstrating, or argu-

ing seriously, with the great, and gay, and fashionable world, on the absurdity and indelicacy of employing generally men-midwives, whether their assistance be needed or not. I should as soon think of running my head against the first axiom of geometry, or against all of them in succession, as of controverting the fundamental maxim of all fashionable and profitable physic; *si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*. I only take the liberty to laugh at that, as at many other fashionable follies, which I know it is in vain, and which at any rate it is not my business, to attempt to reform. As I have had occasion to learn from one very respectable male practitioner of midwifery, who seriously remonstrated with me on the subject, that what I had said in my former Memorial with respect to men-midwives had been misunderstood, I take this opportunity to fulfil my promise to him, by stating explicitly my sentiments on that subject.

In the *first* place then, I hold it as a most sacred principle, too plain and obvious to require any proof or illustration, or to admit of dispute, that women labouring of child, just as much as women not labouring of child, or more if possible, ought to receive every assistance and comfort, which their situation requires.

Further, I hold, that, when the situation of a woman labouring of child is such, as to require chirurgical operation, or assistance by means of instruments, this assistance ought to be rendered to her by a *man*, well instructed in anatomy, regularly bred to Surgery, and accustomed to the use of chirurgical instruments. For I do not conceive that women are fit to practise Surgery; and I am convinced that few, if any, of them would choose to attempt it.

I can hardly conceive that any person should be such a monster of cruelty, or yet of so capricious a temper, as to object to women in labour receiving, whenever they need it, such assistance; and
this

this from such hands as I have specified. But surely it does not follow from these principles, or from any others that ever I heard of, that women labouring of child ought to have the manual assistance of male Surgeons, any more than the application of chirurgical instruments, when they do not need them; which is the case at least ninety-nine times in the hundred.

As I have not the honour to be an Atheist, I firmly believe that women, by nature are just as able to bear and nurse children, as their mates are to beget them; often much better; as they every now and then take occasion to convince the world in general, and their affectionate husbands in particular. Nay, I believe they are made for those very purposes, and so well qualified for them, that it would contribute greatly both to their health and happiness, if they were constantly employed either in breeding or nursing children, for five and twenty or thirty years of their lives. Every body knows the reason for which the bearing of children was made a work of great pain and labour: but it was no part of the sentence passed on Eve and her female descendants, that it should be also a work of danger, or any thing like a disease. There is much reason to suspect that the danger and the diseases often connected with child-bearing, are produced by our own preposterous management, and our absurd contrivances and interference, in order to assist nature, in one of her most important operations; which, like all the rest of them, is contrived with perfect knowledge and wisdom.

As soon as I knew what midwifery meant, I formed that notion of its importance, which is expressed in the following passage of a very popular work, written by my father, and published near forty years ago.

“ Every other animal brings forth its young without any assistance; but we judge Nature insufficient for that work; and think a midwife understands it better. What numbers of infants as well as mothers are destroyed by the preposterous management

“ nagement of these artists, is well known to all who have inquired
 “ into this matter. The most knowing and successful practi-
 “ ers, if they are candid, will own, that in common and natural
 “ cases Nature is entirely sufficient, and their business is only to
 “ assist her efforts, in case of weakness of the mother, or an unna-
 “ tural position of the child.”

That portion of common sense and sympathetic tenderness, which nature hath implanted in all mankind, has taught **them** uni-
 versally, that it is proper for women, in those hours of pain and
 sorrow, to have the *comfort* and *encouragement*, which those of their
 own sex who had been in the same situation can best give them, and
 which in general is much better for them than the *assistance* of
 professed midwives. But as the discharge of that humane and
 charitable office must often have been irksome and inconvenient
 to women who had other business and other duties to perform,
 in all towns and populous countries midwifery has become
 the profession of a few experienced matrons. There is too
 much reason to believe, that many of these have often been
 too busy, and have endeavoured to give much assistance, where
 none was needed; sometimes with a view to shorten the time
 of their own irksome attendance; sometimes to gratify the im-
 patience of those under their care; sometimes to raise their
 art, and themselves, in the opinion of their patients and others.
 There is at least equal reason to believe, that the same considera-
 tions, and the additional motive of wishing to show their own vast
 superiority in knowledge and dexterity over common midwives,
 have induced, and ever will induce, many male practitioners of
 midwifery to be as needlessly and as perniciously busy. A man
 who is to live by midwifery as a profession must be well establish-
 ed in reputation and practice, and must even have an uncommon
 share of wisdom and virtue, before he dare venture to tell his pa-
 tients, or even to let them perceive by his conduct, that in ninety-
 nine cases of the hundred, they had no occasion for his assistance,
 and

and that he did nothing for them ; in short, that bearing children is one of the things that they must do for themselves, because nobody can do it for them. At least I do not remember to have heard or read of any women who became mothers by proxy ; as many great, and wife, and good men have become fathers, without any trouble to themselves. That women may bear children for themselves, in the great proportion of cases specified, must be pretty evident from the most obvious considerations. When the first man-midwife that we know of, Paulus Ægineta, was born, there were about one hundred millions of people in the Roman Empire. At this time there is not in the great Empire of China one man-midwife : and yet at least thirty thousand children are born in that empire *every day* ; and probably twice or thrice as many in the rest of the world, without any such preternatural assistance. Even in those countries of Europe, in which the fashion of employing men-midwives has prevailed the most and the longest, still a large proportion of the women bear children without their help, as the grandmothers and great-grandmothers of all of them did. Our ladies, who most firmly believe that they cannot bear their own children, but must be delivered by a male operator, and our gentlemen, who, no less wisely, believe that such is the case with their wives, and their sisters, and their daughters, cannot fail to know, that their mothers, and aunts, and grandmothers, in all the generations that have been since the creation of the world, bore their own children : yet none of them think of enquiring when and why this new curse was entailed upon the daughters of Eve. Any of them who have a little curiosity, and not much to do, may perhaps find some amusement in calculating the number of persons from whom they are lineally descended, even within forty or fifty generations. The series increases rapidly, 2, 4, 8, 16, for the first, second, third, and fourth generations past ; then all these numbers are to be added together to shew the sum total of their ancestors in any given

given number of generations : but if they take only the last great number of the series, they will soon find that they must have had, within the number of generations specified, *thousands*, nay *millions* of *millions* of ancestors, if there had been so many on the face of the earth at any one time : and whatever deductions may be made from those vast numbers, on the score of cousinship, still it will remain certain, that every person must have had millions of ancestors, one half of whom must have been females, who bore their children without the help of men-midwives.

The same kind of calculation will also afford much comfort to those who have succeeded in persuading themselves, and labour hard to persuade their Physicians, that in their families there are no hereditary diseases. As to the business of Midwifery, which led to these remarks, I have only further to add, that in every case in which there is reason to apprehend any danger, or any preternatural difficulty, in childbirth ; that is, whenever a woman is deformed ; for I know of nothing else that can enable any person to foresee such danger or difficulty, the assistance of a skilful male operator, with all proper instruments, should be provided in due time, but certainly not employed unless absolutely needed. In those cases, whether of deformity or not, in which some assistance, but not that of surgical instruments, is needed, I conceive it may be given as well, and probably better, for a most obvious reason, by a woman.

I consider bearing children as exactly on the same footing with performing the more common offices of nature. Every lady who experiences preternatural difficulty or impediment on any such occasion, and is thereby exposed to disease or danger, ought unquestionably to receive such assistance as her situation requires : and all of us, I am sure, Physicians, Surgeons, and Apothecaries, in our several capacities, will at all times be found eager to render her every service in our power. But unless there be absolute necessity

cessity for it, I should think it indelicate and improper for any male person to give his manual assistance : and I should think it amply sufficient for all purposes of safety and dignity, on such occasions, and also more consistent with the vulgar notions of decency and delicacy, if a Knight of the discreetest, or, according to the rank and fortune of the Lady, two or more such Knights, properly armed and accoutred, should mount guard at her Ladyship's door.

The remark with which my father has introduced the passage that I have quoted from his *Comparative View*, I know, is not strictly accurate : it must be understood with certain limitations and exceptions. The industry and patient observations of modern naturalists have ascertained, that the females of some kinds of animals do really need assistance, and particularly the assistance of the male, in bringing forth their young. This is well known to be the case with the toad, and with some other loathsome reptiles : but it has never even been pretended, that such is the case with any of those animals whose bodily constitution and functions most nearly resemble our own ; and whom we, perhaps foolishly and presumptuously, call the nobler and more perfect animals. In strict philosophical propriety, we must admit, that all the productions of nature are good and perfect. Even the ingenious Frenchman, to whom we owe that interesting discovery with respect to the toad, introduces his account of it by wishing, for the benefit of some readers, that what he was to tell us had related rather to pigeons and turtle-doves, than to a kind of animal that we cannot think of without horror : but he adds very sagaciously, that the imagination and the eyes *du Physicien* are not so delicate. (See *Memoires de l'Academie Royale des Sciences*, 1741 ; Article, *Grapaud male Accoucheur de sa femelle*.) Such being, for reasons which we do not fully understand, the wise institution of nature with respect to that animal, it is evidently as proper

and becoming, for the male toad to give his assistance, and for the female to receive it, when she is in labour, as it is for men and women to become fathers and mothers. But men and women are not toads ; nor under any obligation, physical or moral, that I can perceive, to follow their example in that respect.

If the case were not real, and so recent, as to be still fresh in the memory of many thousands not near so old as I am, it would be thought a most extravagant fiction, to state, by way of illustration of my opinion on this subject, what was proposed, and in some measure done, by a certain unworthy member of our most noble Faculty. This celebrated Mountebank, observing how many difficulties and deficiencies often occur, with respect to that function which must always precede the bearing of children, and is therefore just as necessary to the prosperity, and even to the existence of every State ; knowing also how often such deficiencies and diseases are the objects of regular medical practice in private ; nobly resolved to make his superior knowledge of that branch of physic a public benefit, for the good of his country. In prosecution of this generous and spirited plan, he publicly read lectures on generation, in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and, I believe, several other cities of this kingdom. He also fitted up, and opened for public use, a splendid temple of Health, as he called it, and a still more splendid temple of Hymen : in one or both of which temples, the rosy Goddess of Health appeared *in propria persona*, and dispensed very freely her healthful favours among her ardent votaries. If my memory does not greatly deceive me, his temple of Hymen was within a few doors of his Majesty's palace of St James's. I believe he had in that temple several convenient chambers, for the sake of Clinical practice : but he had one in particular fitted up in a style of extraordinary magnificence, with what he called a celestial bed, and a most splendid electrical apparatus ; and many other contrivances, ærial, etherial, and magnetical ; with which he

he was to perform miracles, and to enable many great and gay people to become fathers or mothers ; which honour, without his aid, they had no chance of attaining. As his doctrine and practice were equally repugnant to decency and common sense, and as there are no bounds to the folly and credulity of the people among whom he practised, I have no doubt that the fashion so auspiciously begun by him would soon have become general, at least among the rich and great. But the genial Doctor's too ardent zeal for his favourite science carried him a step too far : it carried him to Dublin. Thither he went express, to teach and help Irishmen to beget children. One bold Scotchman, to the immortal honour of our country be it known, went singly to attack a great and gallant people on their strong corner. Such an insult could not be endured by any people ; least of all by the chosen people of St Patrick : who, on this occasion, behaved with infinitely more spirit and good sense, than the inhabitants of either end of this Island had shown. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, feeling no doubt his own share of the indignity, threatened to send him to Bridewell : and measures, as I have been told, were actually concerted for tossing him in a blanket at his first lecture. But the genial Doctor, understanding his danger, by a quick retreat, escaped the fate of Sancho Panza ; leaving however the men of Ireland as ignorant, and as incapable as he found them, of their first great duty as men and citizens. Yet we hear of no complaints, from that country, of ignorance, incapacity, or neglect of that duty ; nor has there been any failure in its population : And I firmly believe, that the case would have been the same, and that the females would have done their part of that first duty to their country just as well, if they had had as little assistance from Men-Midwives, as the males had from that illustrious Mountebank.

There remain yet to be considered two very splendid passages of Mr John Bell's pamphlet, deeply interesting to the Managers and to the public ; and well worthy of ample discussion, both on account of their superior rhetorical merit, and also for the atrocity of the misrepresentations which they contain.

The first of these occurs in the 38th page of his second section ; in the preceding part of which, he has given a very ample and eloquent account “ of the origin and nature of the connection between the Royal Infirmary and the College of Surgeons.” Under this head, he details very fully the great and various merits of the Surgeons, both active and passive, with respect to the Infirmary : I mean both all the good that they have done, and all the evil that they have suffered ; that is, in plain English, all the evils, inconveniencies, and dangers, which *their patients* have suffered, by their connection with this Hospital ; for all of which, it appears that he thinks the Surgeons well entitled to take great credit and merit to themselves. This detail occupies full twelve pages of his Answer to me, namely, from page 26. to 38. of his second section. To these pages, by far too long to quote here, I beg leave to refer the curious or distrustful reader. After enumerating the many evils to which the patients were exposed, he finishes his grand enumeration and climax of the sufferings of the patients, and the merits of the Surgeons, in these memorable words : “ Worse than all, our
 “ patients are exposed to infections from the Medical Wards, and
 “ especially to a disease, the Hospital fore, which seizes all those
 “ who have even the smallest incisions practised upon them : it infects all the ulcers, changes the slightest sores into gangrenes ;
 “ and this disease, which is frequent, in exact proportion to the
 “ size of an Hospital, is so peculiar, that it is named Hospital-gangrene. It is like a plague ; it rages twice a year in such a
 “ degree,

“ degree, that the nurses even are infected ; the slightest scratch in
 “ their fingers turns out a most formidable sore, and at certain
 “ seasons no operation can be safely performed.”

This passage well deserves to be considered more ways than one ; rhetorically, physically, logically, and morally. Considered rhetorically, it is evidently beyond all praise ; it is indeed such a splendid example of superior genius, as probably no man in the world but Mr John Bell could have thought of. In this point of view, it is no less than a bold attempt to snatch my own stick out of my hand, and with it to knock me down.

To explain this, I must quote a passage from my former Memorial, (page 24th), to show in what cautious and general terms I had alluded to that cruel evil, which Mr John Bell so boldly thrusts in our faces, and seems to take delight in exaggerating to the utmost. After mentioning many advantages which might reasonably be expected from the attendance of a Surgeon permanently appointed for the Hospital-duty, I add the following paragraph.

“ Moreover, such a Surgeon, in the course of his attendance in
 “ an Hospital, has opportunities of observing many defects or
 “ errors, in the general system of management, with respect to
 “ the patients in his department ; has time to consider how they
 “ may best be supplied or corrected ; to propose plans of improve-
 “ ment, and to get these introduced, and fairly tried and adopted.
 “ This is always an ungracious task, and a work of much time
 “ and labour ; forasmuch as it never fails to meet with strong op-
 “ position, from the force of habit, the prejudices, the pride, the
 “ laziness and the obstinacy of those who must execute the plans
 “ proposed.”

This delicate allusion to evils but too generally known, I conceived to be sufficient for my purpose. It could not fail to be understood by every Surgeon, and by almost every Student, who
 had

had attended in this Hospital. If any of the Managers, not of the Medical profession, did not understand it sufficiently, it could easily have been explained to them privately; but I should have been sorry, without necessity, to have shocked the public, and especially the sick poor, with the knowledge of all the horrid evils, and the apprehension of the worst dangers, to which those were exposed who were admitted into the Surgeons Wards: even though I firmly believed, and do still believe, that those evils and dangers to which I alluded with so much reserve, and which Mr John Bell has proclaimed with no reserve at all, were purely the *fault* of *some* of the attending Surgeons, and ultimately of that system of their indiscriminate attendance by rotation, which it was my object to get abolished. I must also declare, that, till I read his Answer to me, I had never seen or heard so dreadful an account of that evil. For good reasons, however, I shall not dispute his *fact*, but let him and his friends take it as he has stated it, and as they have adopted and sanctioned his statement of it: let them make the most or the worst of their own fact; remembering always, that, along with it, they must take its necessary consequences, which are considerably different from what they thought of. Some of these necessary consequences, implied in their own fact as stated by themselves, I shall take the liberty to point out to them. I beg it may be observed also, that while, in compliment to them, I admit *their fact* in all its horrors, I do not admit their theory with respect to the cause of it. This point, which is of much importance, must be determined by evidence of a kind very different from an assertion of Mr John Bell, or a vote of thanks of his clients.

All that I alluded to, in the passage quoted from my former Memorial, indeed all that I had ever known or heard of, with respect to the evils alluded to in that paragraph, was only, that *sometimes*, from neglect of due ventilation and cleanliness in the Surgeons Wards, the patients in them suffered severely; a slight wound or
ulcer

ulcer in many cases, degenerating into a bad spreading sore of great extent, scarce to be healed, sometimes running to gangrene, and attended with fever, and ultimately proving fatal. I understood likewise, that, in many instances, operations seemingly well performed, had soon proved fatal, from the same causes: instead of good suppuration and healing, bad spreading ulceration, and gangrene, and fever, supervening upon them. I understood even that such bad condition of wounds or ulcers had sometimes spread in the Surgeons Wards of this Hospital, as in other hospitals, seemingly by contagion. I knew that this did not happen *always*, or even generally in this Hospital; and I thought I had known the reason of its sometimes happening, and sometimes not; namely, that some of the attending Surgeons were duly attentive to ventilation and cleanliness, with respect to which others of them were most culpably negligent. I had often heard that this difference in their conduct and practice in the Surgery Wards was very apparent; and I believed it without hesitation, because I knew, from repeated experience, that there were such differences among them, on those points, in private practice. I have had many occasions of observing, that, in the treatment of patients labouring under medical, not surgical diseases, for example fevers, some of them were as attentive as possible to ventilation and cleanliness, which others of them seemed never once to think of. As this latter mode of practice could not proceed entirely from ignorance, I judged that it was part of their system; of which indeed one or two of them gave me some pretty broad hints, when I urged the necessity of clean linen, open windows, and no fires. If they acted on the same principles in the Surgery Wards, I can have no doubt what the consequence must have been in two months, or even much less.—It may with some confidence be inferred from Mr John Bell's horrible account of the evils in question, that my notion of them when I wrote that paragraph last quoted

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from my former Memorial, was *not worse* than the truth ; and that the more particular account which I have here given of it is at least no *exaggeration*. Nor, in my opinion, would it be going too far, to infer from the passage last quoted from Mr. John Bell's Answer to me, that he and his clients knew well that the evils in question were too great and notorious to be denied, or concealed, or explained away : and that therefore, like a man of genius, and a great orator, he endeavoured to make the best he could of so bad a business ; by proclaiming it in terms at least as strong as were consistent with truth, but very dexterously transferring the reproach of it from the Surgeons to the Physicians. On this point Mr John Bell and I chiefly differ ; and I fear we differ irreconcilably. Admitting his *fact*, or all his *facts*, as stated by himself, it is unquestionably reasonable, and even necessary in point of science, to enquire into the evidence of his *opinion* with respect to the *cause* of those *facts* ; namely, that the Hospital-gangrene, with all its horrible consequences to the patients in the Surgeons Wards, is produced by infections from the Medical Wards. Though he has most rhetorically stated this *opinion* as a matter of *fact*, and in terms as strong and positive as any of the facts and assertions with which it is blended, yet I cannot suppose either him, or any of his clients, so ignorant of science, as not to know, that his account of the origin of that horrid disease, whether right or wrong, is but a matter of opinion or judgment, which, if just and true, may be proved by proper evidence, and which, if erroneous, may be disproved, by accurate observations, and strict inferences from these. And if by such means it were completely disproved, this would imply no impeachment of the probity and veracity of men who had *bona fide* believed and expressed that opinion ; but only a little diminution of their character for accuracy in observation, and strictness and soundness in reasoning.

As he has not condescended to mention the reasons on which his opinion is founded, and as I never heard any reasons assigned for such an opinion, nor indeed ever heard of the opinion itself till I met with it in his pamphlet, it is equally unnecessary and impossible to attempt to show the fallacy of the observations, and the errors of the reasoning, which led to that singular opinion. In strict scientific propriety, his opinion on that point, just like his numerous facts already discussed in this Memorial, ought to go for nothing, and to be regarded as only a kind of dream, till some direct and complete proof of it be given. But, on so important a subject, it would be wrong to be very punctilious: and therefore, waving all such considerations, I shall state a few of the many reasons which occur to me for thinking his opinion, or scientific fact, with respect to the origin of the hospital-gangrene in the surgeons wards, just as erroneous, and as impossible, as any of his other most splendid facts already considered.

Supposing, first, for the sake of argument, that the medical wards were as full of infections as his heart could wish; supposing even that there were fifty patients in them ill of the plague; I do not believe, judging from the analogy of very numerous and accurate observations with respect to the spreading of diseases by infection, that such infections could reach the surgeons wards, so as to produce any disease in the patients in them. It is known in fact, that the plague itself does not spread to any considerable distance through the air, and that, by avoiding contact, or very close communication, with those ill of the plague, the danger of catching it by infection is effectually precluded. A few years ago, this was tried with success, in very unfavourable circumstances, on board a great ship of war, (the *Theseus* of 74 guns), on the coast of Syria. Four or five French prisoners, ill of the plague, were received on board that ship. One of them, an officer, was allowed a cabin to himself; the rest of them were kept together in a small place (birth), separated from the rest of the crew only

by a partition of painted canvas. In this situation they recovered: the officer, seemingly by his own obstinacy, died: but what is of much more consequence, by that judicious care of Mr Tainsh, the surgeon of the Theseus, the spreading of the plague from the infected prisoners to the crew, in number above five hundred, was completely prevented. Numberless other facts of the same kind, and perfectly well attested, with respect to the preventing contagious fevers from spreading, may be found in the writings of Dr Haygarth, and of many other eminent Physicians, who, within these twenty years, have attended, minutely and judiciously, to that important subject.

Supposing, secondly, still for the sake of argument, that *infections* of any kind, or of all kinds that are known, of common continued fever with or without spots, of small-pox, measles, scarlet fever, erysipelas, dysentery, hooping-cough, &c. from the medical wards, may reach the surgeons wards of this Infirmary, in such a degree of concentration and force as to be highly noxious, I do not believe that they would produce the hospital-gangrene in any of the surgeons patients: nor can I believe that such infections should produce one kind of effect in patients who have wounds or ulcers, and their own specific but very different effects in patients who have sound skins. But as there are at least as great differences with respect to faith, as to understanding and knowledge, among Physicians and Surgeons, I have no doubt that some will be found with faith enough to believe intuitively all those propositions which to me appear to require the most ample and rigorous proof.

I shall therefore endeavour to shew, that the opinion in question *must* be erroneous, for as much as it implies, by *necessary consequence*, certain inferences, which are notoriously false in point of fact. One of the most obvious of these is the following. If infections, or noxious effluvia, from the medical wards, can reach the

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the surgeons wards, by the windows, or the stair-cases, or the cloaths of those whose duty it is to go into every part of the Hospital, the same infections, or effluvia, *must* be infinitely more copious, more concentrated and strong, and therefore much more noxious, in the medical wards themselves, from which they proceed; and therefore in these wards they *must necessarily* produce at least the same bad effects, but probably much worse effects of the same kind, which Mr John Bell asserts they produce in the surgeons wards. But it never was even pretended that this happened in the medical wards, to those patients, on whom the slightest, or not the slightest, incisions and excoriations have been performed. In the common medical, in the clinical, in the fever wards, just as readily as in the surgeons wards, the nurses scratch their hands and fingers: nay I have known them, even when there were patients in the clinical wards ill of infectious fevers, scratch one another's faces very handsomely, and not very slightly, having got drunk with the wine which I had prescribed for those patients. But I never knew nor heard of one of them getting the hospital-gangrene on her hands or face from such scratches. Some patients are occasionally admitted into the common medical and clinical wards, with simple, or scrofulous, or syphilitic, or cancerous ulcers; and hundreds of patients in these wards, every year, undergo slight incisions or wounds, by bleeding, either with the lancet or with leeches, or by cupping and scarifying, by opening imposthumes, by puncturing, or by tapping for dropsies of different kinds; and worse than all, undergo ample excoriation, by blisters, without getting hospital-gangrene, or any thing like it; nay such excoriations and small incisions, as by bleeding with the lancet or leeches, are often performed on patients actually labouring under the infectious fever, without inducing any hospital-gangrene: and sometimes, in the course of such fevers, though much less frequently in the Hospital than in private practice among the

lower orders of people, common black gangrene has taken place in some of the parts on which the patient had chiefly rested; which black gangrene has separated, and healed, in the common manner, without exhibiting any of the peculiar symptoms of the hospital-sore. The same has occurred, within my observation, in several instances of gangrene in dropfical limbs, both from their bursting spontaneously, (as it is called), and from their being punctured to prevent their bursting, and to relieve the urgent symptoms of the disease. The same has also happened, within my knowledge, when the blistered parts gangrened in patients ill of very bad infectious fevers: but this is so rare an occurrence, that, to the best of my remembrance, I have not seen one instance of it these twenty years.

From all that I have had occasion to know of the medical and the surgeons wards in this Hospital, and from all that I have heard or read of the hospital-gangrene, far from believing that in the Surgeons patients it is produced by infections from the medical wards, I strongly suspect, and almost believe, that some patients labouring under that disease might have been cured, if they had been removed from the surgeons to the physicians wards; that is, removed from foul, into comparatively pure air. I have read of a patient recovering of the same gangrene, in the hospital at Lyons, by being laid in a cold door-case; and of several patients in the Hotel Dieu at Paris, ill of different diseases, who were supposed to be in the last agonies, and on that account were removed from the common wards, that they might die without disturbing their neighbours, and yet recovered on being laid in the *Salle des agonisans*; where, without being tormented by unavailing or perhaps absurd medical practice, they had the advantage of breathing purer and cooler air than they had enjoyed from the moment that they were admitted into that great but ill-managed hospital. Though I am sensible it would be criminal to try
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the experiment, yet I think it highly probable, that a patient who has just undergone a capital operation, would have a much better chance of a good and speedy recovery, if laid in the fever-ward, clean, and well ventilated, as it is, than he would have had if laid in the surgeons ward, in that state of cleanliness and ventilation which has sometimes prevailed in it.

From the very confident manner in which the hospital-gangrene in the Surgeons patients is attributed to infections from the medical wards, it should seem, that neither Mr John Bell nor his clients had any notion, that *infections*, I mean infectious fevers of the worst kind, could begin in Surgeons patients, either from want of cleanliness and ventilation, implying the accumulation, and perhaps the corruption of the ordinary effluvia of the human body, or, in addition to these, from the peculiarly noxious effluvia from wounds, ulcers, and gangrenes, which are such frequent objects of surgical practice, and so strongly require particular attention to ventilation and cleanliness. It is so generally and justly thought needless at least, if not foolish, to dispute about names and words, that few people can prevail on themselves to attend patiently to such a discussion, even in the few cases in which it is really of importance. That there are such cases appears to me certain; nor should I scruple to say, that, in every case in which a word or name is explained or defined, or, even without explanation or definition, is used and applied, to express an erroneous or hypothetical opinion or notion with respect to the thing denoted by it, then it becomes necessary, for the purposes of candid and good reasoning, to show the errors and imperfections of the notion or opinion expressed by such an improper word or phrase. Of this there cannot be a stronger proof, or better illustration, than Mr John Bell has given us, in the use which he has made of the phrase hospital-gangrene. This phrase, considered by itself, is as intelligible and as innocent, as the common phrases, jail-fever, sea-scurvy, French disease, or St Vitus's dance.

dance. But if these several names were employed to denote, not merely certain diseases, that is, particular combinations and successions of symptoms, which might be faithfully described and easily known, but also certain opinions with respect to the causes of those diseases, it would be proper to enquire into the justness of these opinions; and to protest against such of them as were found to be either positively erroneous, or at best only hypothetical, as not being established by any competent evidence. For example, if an author, on the faith or force of the term *sea-scurvy*, should take it into his head to maintain, that this disease was produced only by the sea, and its salt and moist effluvia, and never could take place on shore; and that it could neither be prevented nor cured in people who continued long at sea: if another author should maintain, that the disease called the jail-fever could be produced only in a jail, and could neither be prevented nor cured in people who were confined in jails: and if another author should maintain, that the French disease could be got only in France, and was entirely produced by the infectious air of that country: all these opinions, though seemingly implied in the names of the diseases, and almost admitted and sanctioned by all who used those names, would be great and pernicious errors. Every person, of competent understanding and knowledge, would think them as absurd, as the persuasion that the disease called St Vitus's Dance, was produced only by the operation of that Saint, as a punishment on those who had neglected the annual worship at his shrine, and was to be cured only by the patients going to his shrine, and there dancing till they were heartily tired, and fell to the ground.

Such imaginary cases as I have stated, may well appear too extravagant even for illustration; yet they are little, if at all worse than the real case, which Mr John Bell has exhibited seriously, in the account that he gives of the hospital-gangrene. Not content with the use of the phrase to denote the disease in question,
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which could not have been made the subject of dispute or animadversion, he has thought fit to make it the groundwork of his own theory with respect to the cause of the disease; of that theory which is calculated to transfer the blame of it from the Surgeons to the Physicians. He tells us, that this disease is produced by *infections from the medical wards*; that it is frequent in *exact proportion* to the size of an hospital; that it seizes *all* those who have even the *smallest incisions* practised upon them; that it is like a *plague*; that it *rages twice a-year* in such a degree that the nurses even are infected; that the *slightest scratch* in their fingers turns out a most formidable fore; and that at *certain seasons* no operations can be *safely* performed. These are the points which I think deserve to be considered logically, and physically; as affording the most satisfactory proof of the vast progress which Mr John Bell and his clients have made both in logical and physical science.

First, let us consider what is obviously implied in its being frequent in *exact proportion* to the size of an hospital, and in its raging in *this Hospital twice a-year* like a plague. From these two propositions, it follows, by necessary consequence, that in an hospital half the size of ours it *must* rage but once a-year; that in an hospital the fourth part of the size of ours it *must* rage but once in two years; that in an hospital the tenth part of the size of ours, and containing only fifteen or twenty patients, it *must* rage once, and but once, in five years; but that in an hospital twice the size of ours, it *must* rage four times, and not oftener, in a year; that in an hospital ten times the size of ours, and containing 1500 or 2000 patients, it *must* rage twenty times in a year. But as the disease, in any one patient, lasts generally from one to three or four weeks, and moreover spreads, by contagion, from one patient to another, in an hospital ten times, or even four times, the size of ours, it *must* constantly rage like a plague; and therefore every patient admitted into such an hospital, whether under the care of the Physicians or Surgeons, provided only he has any the *smallest incision* performed

formed upon him, *must, ipso facto*, be seized with hospital-gangrene: no operation can be safely performed in such an hospital; nay scarce without the *certainty* of death to the patient; and every nurse who scratches her own finger, or gets her face scratched by one of the sisterhood, *must* also get the hospital-gangrene, and probably rot and die with it.

In another point of view, the assertions, that it is produced by *infections from the medical wards*, that it rages *twice a-year*, and that it is frequent in *exact proportion* to the size of an hospital, are absolutely inconsistent. If it rages in this hospital twice a-year, it *must* proceed from a cause, or combination of causes, which occurs twice a-year, and no oftener. If that supposed cause were constantly present, as the effluvia from the medical wards must be, or even occurred oftener than twice a-year, while yet the assigned effect of it occurred but twice in the same time, it would be a proof that the assigned cause was not the real cause of the effect in question: and if the disease, the supposed effect, occurred oftener than its assigned cause was applied, it would be a proof that it proceeded, not from that, but from some other cause.

These propositions, which appear abstruse and obscure, perhaps even doubtful, when expressed in general terms, will be found perfectly intelligible, and obvious to every capacity, nay quite familiar to the thoughts of men, when illustrated by proper examples. The equinoxes, as every body knows, occur twice a-year. Some portion of scientific knowledge must be acquired before a person can understand what combination of causes produces that equality of day and night: but every ploughman and day-labourer, who has but common sense, must be supposed to understand and believe that it depends on something as its cause, which occurs twice a-year, and no oftener. New moon and full moon occur each of them between twelve and thirteen times in a year; and every person of common sense must understand, that the causes of them respectively occur just as often in the year; and every

every such person would perceive and be shocked with the absurdity of supposing the equinoxes produced by a cause which occurred at least once every month, and of supposing the changes of the moon, as they occur every month, to proceed from a cause which occurred only twice a-year. I presume every person who knows that the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours, whether he knows or does not know the combination of causes which produces this effect, must believe that such combination of causes occurs just as often as its effect; and every person who knows that the time of the ebbing and flowing of the tide changes from day to day to all times of the day and night, must believe that the cause of such ebbing and flowing varies as much and as regularly in the time of its recurrence.

In another point of view, the assertion, that the hospital-gangrene is frequent in *exact proportion* to the size of an hospital, necessarily excludes the influence of all other circumstances, either as means of preventing it, or as secondary, concurrent, and accessory causes in producing it. For example, if, in consequence of the *exact size* of this Infirmary, the hospital-gangrene rages in it like a plague exactly twice a-year, no degree of attention to cleanliness, and ventilation, no care that can be employed to keep the patients in good pure air, to keep them from getting drunk, perhaps with whisky, and from lying, perhaps in the streets, exposed to cold and wet when they are drunk, no care or skill in medical or surgical treatment, can prevent that horrid disease from raging like a plague just twice a-year. But, on the other hand, no degree of negligence with respect to cleanliness and ventilation, not even the utmost privation of pure good air that is consistent with life, or the total want of clean linen to their persons and beds, or the greatest filthiness in which they could be kept, or their getting drunk with whisky six days of the week, could make the patients in this In-

firmly subject to the hospital-gangrene more frequently than twice a-year.

On the other hand, if it is admitted that these circumstances, favourable or unfavourable, have any effect either in producing or preventing the hospital-gangrene, or in making it either more or less frequent than it would be in the opposite circumstances; then *necessarily* Mr John Bell's proposition at present under review *must* be false: that is to say, the disease in question cannot be frequent in exact proportion to the size of an hospital. It then becomes a fair and rational subject of enquiry, by observations at least, partly even by experiments, and strict deduction from these, to ascertain what and how great their effects are, and whether by due attention to those things which are favourable, such an hospital as this, or even one forty times as large, may be altogether preserved from the prevalence of the hospital-gangrene in it, or at least how near it is possible to come to this most desirable end. It would be equally fair and rational to ascertain by observation, though not by wilful or contrived experiments, whether the smallest hospital, especially if it were crowded with patients, and these were kept very dirty and in bad air, might not be subject to the ravages of the hospital-gangrene very frequently.

Notwithstanding his very confident assertion of the doctrine in question, and their conduct in adopting and functioning it, I doubt much whether Mr John Bell or his clients will think any such observations or experiments necessary to enable them to judge what would be the result of such an investigation. I do not believe that any of them would hesitate even a moment to give the *proper* answers to such questions as the following. Supposing the size of this Infirmary to remain as at present, but only twelve or fourteen patients to be received into it, and these patients to be laid only one in each ward, and all of them to have
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either wounds or ulcers, no matter whether from operation or accident; would these patients be subject to the hospital-gangrene twice in the year, or oftener, or feldomer; or would they be subject to it at all? If two or three, or at the utmost a very few patients, so as not nearly half to fill the wards, were received into them, and if they and the wards were kept uniformly clean and well ventilated, would such patients be exposed to the ravages of the hospital-gangrene? If all the wards in the Hospital were crowded to the utmost with such patients, and these patients were allowed to remain as dirty, and in as foul air as possible, would they be exempt from the ravages of the hospital-gangrene, or would they be most deplorably subject to it? Lastly, if, instead of a great hospital, a small house, or even a single bed-chamber of ordinary size, for example, a room of sixteen feet square, and ten high, were made the scene of observation and experiment, and if in such a room ten or a dozen such patients were laid, with no attention to ventilation and cleanliness; would the disease in question never appear among them? And, on the contrary, if in such a room only two or three patients were laid, and these were kept very clean, and in pure air, would they be subject to the hospital-gangrene? These different views of the same question I have stated at full length, not merely to explain and establish that opinion, with respect to the origin and spreading of the hospital-gangrene, which, from all that I have read, and all that I have heard about it, I believe to be true; but much more in order to show, that those who had so boldly asserted a very different opinion with respect to it, had not believed the opinion which they asserted. If they think I do them any injustice, in this very unfavourable inference, they can easily refute it, and vindicate themselves, which I shall be happy to see them do, by declaring explicitly, that they believe all those inferences which correspond with their doctrine are true, and will be found so

whenever they are tried experimentally; and on the other hand, that all those inferences, to which I have alluded, which are inconsistent with their doctrine, appear to them false and incredible; and that they will be found false when brought to the test of observation and experiment. It will also be proper, for very obvious reasons, that they should authenticate such declaration of their hospital-creed, by putting their names to it; else probably many people will be so foolish and incredulous, as to think it impossible that any individuals of the medical profession should be so ignorant, or so insane, as to hold such opinions. It may fairly be presumed, notwithstanding their acknowledged ignorance of logic, which Mr John Bell, in his own name and that of his clients, has most explicitly avowed in the 16th page of his first section, that none of them will attempt to maintain a proposition, and yet deny its necessary consequences; or will expect any credit for the belief which they express, when they perceive intuitively, without the help of observation or experiment, that all the inferences from it are false.

I have no pretensions, from my own experience, to offer any opinion with respect to the causes, the cure, or the prevention of hospital-gangrene: and I strongly suspect that many things relating to it still remain to be ascertained by observation, experiment, and strict induction from these. From Dr Rollo's observations on this subject, it seems highly probable, if not quite certain, that, besides the common well known erysipelas, (in Scotland commonly called the *Rose*, and in England, *St Anthony's Fire*), there are at least two different *kinds* of hospital-gangrene; probably each produced by its own specific cause, and capable of being propagated by its own peculiar contagion, unless this be prevented by cleanliness and ventilation. Perhaps further more enlarged and accurate observations may shew that there are *many* kinds (*genera* or *species*) of bad suppuration, as there certainly are
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of inflammation; and that several of those bad kinds of suppuration may spread by contagion in ill ventilated hospitals; as all of them may occasionally be received into every hospital, or begin in any one, whether great or small.

Whatever may be the result of such speculations and enquiries, I believe more than enough is already known, by sad experience, of the hospital-gangrene, to enable us to pronounce with certainty, first, that it is *not* frequent in *exact* proportion, or in *any* proportion, to the size of an hospital; secondly, that it is frequent in hospitals, or particular wards of hospitals, *nearly* in the *inverse* proportion of the ventilation and cleanliness preserved in them respectively; that is, *almost* in the *direct* proportion of the badness of the air, and the dirtiness in which the patients are kept: I say *nearly* and *almost* in these proportions; for I conceive it to be ascertained that some other circumstances have influence, though much less general and powerful influence than those which I mentioned, in producing, or assisting to produce, that terrible disease occasionally in a few individuals. Many causes of general weakness, such as previous or attending diseases, intemperance, especially in spirituous liquors, and sometimes, as I think I have seen in more than one instance, severe, long continued, or frequently repeated courses of mercury, seem to have had that effect. Or if those examples of bad, spreading, gangrenous ulceration, which I have sometimes seen under the improper use of mercury, be not proper instances of hospital-gangrene, at least they are very like it, and the one kind of bad suppuration may very properly be employed to illustrate the other.

I have used also the general term *bad* or *foul* air, without presuming to form any opinion of the number and nature of the various noxious effluvia with which the air in an hospital, or not in an hospital, may be loaded and tainted. I do not presume even to judge how much of the bad effect to which I allude is

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to be attributed to the great abundance of such noxious effluvia blended with the air, and how much of it is owing to the want of a due proportion of that peculiar element, and constituent part of common air, which is immediately necessary to the support of life and health, and which in one way or other seems to be consumed and wasted by the functions of life, especially by breathing. It seems more than probable, that both the deficiency of good air, and the great abundance of noxious effluvia, contribute to make the air in hospitals bad, noxious, and almost poisonous, unless great and unremitting attention be given to ventilation and cleanliness: for the useful practical inference is the same on either supposition. I remember to have seen a calculation by some of the French Academicians, who endeavoured to make known, and of course to reform, some of the worst abuses that prevailed in the Hotel Dieu at Paris, particularly with respect to that most essential article, *air*. In this attempt they met with all possible opposition from those who had the management of the hospital; but, in spite of them and their opposition, the philosophers found means to ascertain the dimensions, length, breadth, and height, of one of the great wards, and also the number of patients who were kept in it. From these principles they proved, by an easy and satisfactory calculation, that if the ward had been made quite close (hermetically sealed) at night, all the patients in it *must* have been *dead* before morning. I have forgotten the exact number of hours, nor is that a point of any consequence, in which they must all have perished, partly by the accumulation of their own bad effluvia, but still more for want of the proper vital part of the air, which is consumed in breathing, by every adult person, at the rate of about a gallon of common air in a minute, or a hog'shead in an hour. Every defect of that degree of ventilation and cleanliness which is necessary to preserve people in health and vigour, is an *approach* to that poisonous state of the air, so well pointed

pointed out by the French Academicians as the *necessary* and *speedy* consequence of *no ventilation at all*. Such an approach, from that very cause, may occur in a ward filled with surgery patients, as well as in a ward filled with patients wholly under the care of physicians. Nay, it is still more likely to occur in a ward filled with surgery patients, when any of these, as must often happen, are affected with bad ulcers, carious bones, or common gangrene. We have even precise observations which prove that the jail or hospital fever, in its worst form, has originated in a surgery ward, seemingly by the poisonous effluvia proceeding from one mortified limb. (See Sir John Pringle's *Observations on the Diseases of the Army*, edit. 6. 1768, page 15. and 288.).

As the air in a surgery ward is peculiarly liable to be tainted by such very offensive and noxious effluvia, strict attention to ventilation and cleanliness, in order to prevent their accumulation and bad effects, must be at least as necessary in wards under the sole care of surgeons, as in those which are entirely under the management of physicians. But I scarce think it will be asserted, and I am sure it will not be believed, by any who have competent means of knowledge, that this has *always* been the case with the surgeons wards in this Hospital. I have even heard it maintained, as a kind of excuse for a fact which could not be denied, that it was *impossible* to have the surgeons wards as well ventilated as those of the physicians; partly by reason of the diseases treated in them, partly because the wards themselves were not so high in the ceiling as the physicians wards. To this circumstance there is a strong allusion in Mr John Bell's own pamphlet, sect. 2. page 43. As to the former consideration, I consider it as the strongest possible reason for paying the greatest and most unremitting attention to cleanliness and ventilation in surgery wards; by which means there can be no doubt that all such offensiveness and danger as I allude to may effectually be prevented, though perhaps this will require

quire more care and labour than in medical wards. As to the second circumstance, the lowness of the ceiling of the surgeons wards, it seems to me of very little consequence ; for in the middle, and by far the greater part of them, the height of the ceiling is just the same as in the physicians wards, and it is only towards the sides that the space is a very little curtailed (perhaps *one hundredth* part) by the slope of the ceiling : and this, I conceive, must be fully compensated by the ventilators which are placed in the middle of the roof, and which the physicians wards cannot have. At any rate, there are opposite windows in all those wards, by which, if properly employed, abundant ventilation might be procured ; more even than enough ; more than would be proper or safe for all the patients. But this important point is not a mere matter of opinion. The two small wards in the wings of the same attack story with the surgeons wards, and which have the same height and form of the ceiling, have been found to admit of perfect ventilation and cleanliness, when under the management of the Physicians, even though filled with patients whose cases required that attention the most ; I mean patients labouring under contagious fevers. One of these small wards is at present, and has been for several years, employed as the womens fever-ward ; and is cleaner and better ventilated than most bed-chambers in Edinburgh. The opposite small ward (commonly called the operation ward) which the surgeons have had the use of for several years, was for many years before employed as the mens fever-ward.

Another fact, equally in point, deserves attention. For two years now, the indiscriminate attendance of all the Surgeons in quick rotation has been abolished ; and a trial has been made of a more rational and permanent appointment of Surgeons to take charge of the surgery wards. In these two years, according to Mr John Bell's doctrine, of the hospital-gangrene being frequent in exact proportion to the size of an hospital, and being produced by infections

fections from the medical wards, and raging in this Infirmary twice a-year like a plague, it ought to have raged in it four times : but in fact it has not *raged*, nor *spread*, even once ; and very few instances of it, and these very slight, have appeared in the surgeons wards : so few, and so slight, that they were not regarded as a serious evil.

In proof and illustration of what I have stated about the principal and most frequent cause of that very bad condition of wounds and ulcers, which has been termed hospital-fore or gangrene, particularly of this horrid disease *not* being produced *specifically* by infections from the medical wards, or even *exclusively* by morbid, corrupted, and accumulated effluvia from human bodies, whether under the care of Physicians or Surgeons, I must mention what has been observed of the similar pernicious effects of another kind of bad air, in producing ulceration of the same, or, if possible, of a worse kind. I allude to what has been experienced at Batavia, the air of which is supposed to be the worst in the world, in consequence of its being loaded with noxious effluvia from the neighbouring marshes, and from the stagnating canals and ditches of the city. I quote the words of Dr Lind senior, of Haßlar Hospital : “ And it was particularly observed, that the sickness “ raged with the greatest violence when the rains abated, and the “ sun had evaporated the water in the ditches, so that the mud “ began to appear. The stench from the mud was then intolerable. Nor was the sickness at that time confined to the ships : “ the whole city afforded a scene of disease and death ; streets “ crowded with funerals, bells tolling from morning to night, and “ horses jaded with dragging the dead in hearses to their graves.

“ At that time, a slight cut of the skin, the least scratch of “ a nail, or the most inconsiderable wound, turned quickly into “ a putrid spreading ulcer, which in twenty-four hours consumed “ the flesh even to the bone. This fact is so extraordinary, that “ upon a single testimony credit would hardly be given to it ; yet

“ on board the *Medway* and *Panther* they had the most fatal experience of it, and suffered much from it.” (Essay on Diseases incident to Europeans in hot Climates, Ed. 1768, page 86, 7.).

Those alone who have seen the state of wounds and ulcers in the bad air of Batavia, as well as that which occurs in ill ventilated hospitals; and who have compared them in all their circumstances, can judge whether they are just the same disease or not. Supposing them different, I should think it very foolish to call the one of them the Java sore or Batavia gangrene, as the other is called the hospital sore or gangrene, for as much as it cannot be doubted, that, wherever the air is equally tainted with the same kind of effluvia, the same bad state of wounds and ulcers will be produced. And it is at least possible, and to me it seems probable, that the noxious effluvia from the canals of Batavia, and the foul air of an hospital loaded with effluvia from the human body, though differing in kind as well as degree of badness, and producing *specifically* different diseases of the febrile kind, may yet agree in producing nearly or exactly the same bad kind of ulceration, as they do in producing weakness, languor, and a pale fallow complexion and squalid appearance of the whole body. The feeble languid constitutions, and bloodless faces, of the inhabitants of Batavia, so generally remarked by all who have seen them, seem to differ more in degree than in kind from the corresponding circumstances in those who have been long confined in ill ventilated jails or hospitals. But the fevers produced by the two kinds of bad air are radically different in their symptoms and method of cure, as well as in their causes. The jail or hospital fever, as it is called, is continued and contagious; the Batavian fever is remittent, or the worst kind of intermittent, and no more contagious than a tertian ague is in this country; but withal so virulent, that, as Dr Lind tells us, “ some were seized suddenly with a delirium, and “ died in the first fit; but none survived the third.”

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The difficulty to which I alluded in the paragraph quoted from my former Memorial, is that of prevailing on the servants of the Hospital, the nurses, and even the patients themselves, to do, or allow to be done, what is really necessary for their own safety and welfare. Not one of them can be persuaded that such ventilation and cleanliness as I allude to, is necessary, or good, or even safe for them; and if, by a kind of miracle, all the nurses, and all the patients, were convinced of this, still they would almost equally dislike the irksome and constant labour required to put it in practice. I am sorry to say, that, to my certain knowledge, this kind of ignorance and obstinacy is not confined to the nurses and servants of the Hospital. I have met with it in some Students, who, notwithstanding the strongest admonitions and intreaties that I could employ, would persist in exposing themselves, absurdly and unnecessarily, to the effluvia proceeding from the bodies of patients labouring under bad fevers, because they would not believe that such fevers were contagious. Two years are not yet elapsed, since a misfortune of this kind happened, in the clinical ward, under my own immediate care. Many of my pupils, as I afterwards learned, held very cheap all my good advice and admonitions: the consequence was, that very soon *eight* of them caught the fever, *two* of whom died of it. Yet after all, some of them, I believe, are not yet cured of their favourite doctrine, that the said fever was not contagious. This opinion is one of the most splendid examples of the spirit of medical warfare that has occurred for many years: it began in America, near ten years ago, on occasion of the yellow fever which raged at Philadelphia in 1793. From America it spread to the West Indies, from the West Indies to England, from England to Egypt; and how far it will spread, and when it will cease, I cannot even guess; probably not for many generations. The accumulated weight of the most complete evidence, resulting from the accurate and concurrent observations

of many of the best Physicians that ever lived, from the days of Sir John Pringle and Dr Lind, who were observing and writing near sixty years ago, down even to the present hour, appears to have been set aside with as much ease, and as little ceremony, as the most visionary hypothesis that ever was advanced in Physic. I know too well the spirit of medical disputants, to suppose it possible, that any observations or reasonings of mine should have the smallest weight in such a controversy : but I may reasonably hope that the Managers of this Hospital, at least, will pay much regard to the decisive experience already obtained in it, of the uniform beneficial influence of the fever-wards ; in which, by a regular system of ventilation and cleanliness, the spreading of such fevers among the other patients is prevented, and the danger of them so much lessened, that of the patients ill of fevers received into those wards, at least fifteen out of sixteen are soon restored in health and vigour to their families and their country. This fact I wish to be generally known, for the benefit of all concerned ; and especially in hopes that it may induce the poor when sick of fevers, to go to the Hospital as early as possible ; and also that it may induce the benevolent who are in more affluent circumstances, to urge that salutary advice to them with all their influence : for in this way, and in no other that I am acquainted with, the spreading of the fever in their families, and among their neighbours, may be prevented, and their own chance of recovery may be brought *almost to certainty*. As this opinion, and even the peculiar expression which I have employed to convey it, may be made matter of reprehension and reproach to me, it is necessary to explain fully, that I do not mean to say that every case, without exception, of continued fever received into the fever-wards of this or any other hospital, will necessarily or certainly be either speedily cured, or at least brought in no long time to a favourable termination. I am sensible that, in some cases, from the peculiar virulence of the cause

cause producing the fever; in others, from the peculiarly unfavourable state of the patient's constitution before the invasion of the fever; in others, from strong concurrent causes, of a very unfavourable kind, applied along with the primary cause of the fever, the violence and danger of it, even from the first, may be incomparably greater than usual; may be such even as to baffle all the powers of medicine, or at least all the skill and care of the best Physicians: just as happens in a few unfavourable instances of the small pox; perhaps even in those in whom it has been produced by inoculation. But I am well convinced, both from my own observation, and from the concurrent opinion and experience of other Physicians on the same subject, that such cases are very rare, and that by far the greater number of cases of continued fever that prove fatal, do so in consequence of neglect or mismanagement after the disease has begun, and above all from the patient's not being allowed the benefit of pure cool air, and uniform cleanliness, in the course of the disease. Without meaning in the least to call in question the efficacy of various remedies which are properly and generally employed in the cure of continued fevers, sometimes with complete and immediate success, I declare with confidence, that I would much rather undertake the cure of any number of such patients, with the help of cleanliness, pure cool air, and cold water, without any medicines, than with the help of all the medicines in the dispensatory, without the help of those simple articles of regimen. Nor is my opinion in this respect singular: many other Physicians, who have had equal or better opportunities of observation in this and other hospitals, agree with me in thinking, that the regimen to which I allude is more than half the cure. Of this indeed we have often good proof and illustration, in the great and favourable change observed in such patients, in a few hours after they are laid in the wards of this Hospital, and before they get any powerful medicines, or perhaps any medicines

medicines at all. But to judge rightly of this point, it is necessary to attend to the contrast between the speedy relief, and in most cases the perfect recovery of such patients, and the aggravated state of the disease, and all its horrid symptoms, in those patients who remain in their own wretched, dirty, ill-aired habitations. To many of these patients it is fatal; in some instances whole families have been cut off by it; and in many cases, though it has not been fatal to any individual of a family, it has brought misery and ruin on them all, by its long continuance in the father or mother, on whose daily labour and constant care the family depended for its support; and who, by such a disease are often disabled, for many weeks, sometimes for months, from earning bread for themselves and their children. Nor is this all; for almost certainly such a fever will spread by contagion to several, very probably to all, the members of the family; and perhaps to other families in their neighbourhood, any individuals of which have intercourse with the sick persons, in the foul tainted air of their common dwellings. Now, most or all of these evils may be almost certainly prevented, by sending the patients attacked with fever to the Hospital as early as possible; and by promoting ventilation and cleanliness, to the utmost, in the habitations whence they were removed. I have already mentioned, that the proportion of those who die, to those who recover from such fevers in the Hospital, is as one to fifteen. But of those who die of such fevers in the Hospital; a very large proportion indeed, to the best of my knowledge and belief, at least nine out of ten, have been ill of the disease from five or six to ten or twelve days before they came into the Hospital; and during this time had been miserably neglected or mismanaged; and in consequence of this were past all possibility of cure. Of this indeed some of them have afforded a sad proof, by dying before they could be laid in their beds; and others of them, when first examined in the Hospital, were found to have already the worst symptoms

symptoms of the disease, such as are known to be almost or certainly fatal. From these principles I do not hesitate to infer, that if patients in fevers were uniformly brought to the Hospital very soon after the invasion of the disease, instead of one in fifteen, probably not one in a hundred of them would die of their disease; in other words, probably 990 out of 1000 such patients would soon be restored to health and strength: and what is of still more consequence, probably not the tenth or twentieth part of the number of such fevers which at present occur among the lower orders, would then take place. It does not appear to me impossible almost to extirpate such fevers among the lower orders of people; at least to put an end to them, as either constantly prevalent, (endemic), or occasionally spreading, (epidemic), diseases: in plain English, I think they may be made as rare among the lower, as they have long been among the higher orders of people: and I doubt much whether an hospital, or any number of wards in it that may be required for this purpose, can in any other way be employed so much for the benefit of the public. Of 1000 patients received into an hospital on account of many other very common diseases, consumption, palsy, epilepsy, dropsy, and all the miserable effects of dram-drinking, so small a proportion can ever be restored to health and strength, or made again useful to their families or the public, that I dare not venture to give it a name. After more than thirty years attentive medical observation of the situation of the lower orders in this city, I am fully convinced, that the common continued fever is the greatest evil to which they are exposed, except one: this one every person, who has attended to their situation, must know, is the use of distilled spirits; which is equally destructive to their industry, their morals, and their health; and certainly ruinous to them in mind, body, and estate.

The preceding observations with respect to fever-wards and fever-patients in an hospital, I have stated minutely and strongly; because

because I am sure, that what Mr John Bell has said about the Surgeons patients being exposed to infections from the medical wards, will be understood to relate particularly, if not exclusively, to the fever-wards : Perhaps this was intended by him ; but whether it was or not, it will be supposed that it was. Those are the medical wards, in which the ignorant suppose, and the malicious, including some very keen medical disputants, pretend, that infections are the most abundant, most virulent, and most dangerous. Besides, one of the fever-wards, the womens, is near to one of the Surgeons wards, being on the same story, and separated only by the staircase : and formerly, for many years, the case was the same with the mens fever-ward. Moreover, for some years past, fever-wards, fever-hospitals, and houses of recovery, (as they are called), have been *teterrima belli causa* among our most noble faculty : for while some of our most spirited disputants here have maintained that fevers were not contagious, and have nobly died martyrs to this *anti-contagionist* faith, others, as became them, have gone completely to the opposite extreme, and have maintained, that fevers were so dreadfully contagious, that the effluvia from patients ill of them might produce the disease in others at the distance even of many miles, and probably would do so very generally at the distance of some hundreds of yards. These keen *contagionists*, according to the laudable custom of medical disputants, chose to overlook completely the plainest necessary consequences of their own doctrine ; especially the obvious consideration, that if such were the case, no human power could prevent the fever from spreading through every town, and almost through every country, in which even a single instance of it occurred. But they did not fail to perceive, that such being the inveterate and far-spreading nature of febrile contagion, a fever-ward in an hospital, or a fever-hospital or house of recovery in a town, must be a perpetual source of disease and death to all the
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other patients in such an hospital, and all the inhabitants of such a town. For certain purposes, which I can only guess at, and therefore shall not presume to mention, those horrible apprehensions were proclaimed with such ardent zeal and unceasing clamour, that the peaceable well-meaning inhabitants of some towns, who had no notion of the spirit of medical warfare, were frightened almost or altogether out of their wits. To this hour, many of them firmly believe that a fever-ward, or a fever-hospital, is necessarily a great reservoir or magazine of the most virulent contagion; the effluvia from which may be noxious at least, if not fatal at a great distance. But the very reverse of this is the truth: Such a ward or hospital is just a contrivance, and the best or only one hitherto known, for preventing the accumulation and virulence of such effluvia, which is nearly equivalent to preventing the production of them. It is abundantly ascertained, that those effluvia are dangerous, as proceeding directly from the bodies of patients ill of such fevers; still worse when they are accumulated in their chambers for want of proper ventilation; worst of all when retained and concentrated in their clothes, or in any kind of soft furniture, sometimes even as adhering to hard furniture, or to the walls, the floor, or the ceiling of a room. But it is equally well ascertained, that where there is even moderate ventilation, the same effluvia, as coming directly from the body of the patient, are not noxious even at the distance of a few feet; and that, by thorough ventilation, and great cleanliness, and care in changing frequently the clothes of a patient's person or bed, in washing them with due precautions, in washing even the patient's own body, in washing or white-washing the walls, the roof, and the floor of the chamber in which such a patient has lain, all danger of infection is effectually prevented. It is even a rare occurrence in this city, for such a fever to spread in any family of the higher orders, with that degree of ventilation and cleanliness which is generally preserved in their

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houses : indeed it is so rare an occurrence, that, were it not for the sad examples often seen in the houses of the lower orders, many people would not believe that the common fever is at all contagious. In fever-wards, all those circumstances of ventilation and cleanliness, equally beneficial to the patients and those who have the care of them, are constantly and strictly attended to. I believe they would be found almost universally sufficient : but, in case of need, additional means of safety are employed ; such as fumigations of different kinds, several of which are considered by those who have tried them most as highly efficacious : but, as always happens in physic, they have become subjects of keen, and probably of endless disputes. Whatever may become of these disputes, and of the chemical questions concerning the nature of the contagious effluvia, and the mode of operation of the different fumes employed to correct them, on the principle either of composition or decomposition, one great point at least must remain certain, and plain and intelligible to every capacity, I mean the necessary effect of ventilation. This is just the diffusion of the noxious effluvia in a great quantity of pure air ; and is perfectly analogous to the diffusion of many other substances in pure water. In numberless cases the effect of such diffusion is obvious to our senses : thus one pint of ink diffused in a gallon of water, will impart to it a very considerable tinge of black ; but if the same quantity of ink were diffused in several tons of water, still better if diffused in a small rivulet, the black tinge would no longer be perceptible to the quickest sight. One pint of the strong vitriolic acid diffused in many gallons of water, will make the whole of it very sour : but if it were diluted with many tons of water, or thrown into a stream of running water, its sourness could no longer be perceived. All the smoke of London, and all the fragrance of Edinburgh, become imperceptible to our senses at the distance of only a few miles from those immense masses of noxious effluvia. The case is the same with

with those substances, which in their concentrated state produce the most violent effects, perhaps even mortal diseases, in the human body; and yet when diluted may be employed with safety; may even have pleasant or salutary effects; or, if very much diluted, may have no perceptible effects. A large draught of pure strong brandy may kill a man in a moment: a few small draughts of such brandy will soon make a man dead drunk; and any man may soon get drunk by drinking brandy diluted with five or even ten times its quantity of water. But I conceive it will require some genius to get drunk with brandy diluted with forty times its quantity of water: and if it were diluted with a thousand or ten thousand times its quantity of water, a man might drink of it till he burst, without making the smallest progress towards getting drunk. A few grains of arsenic dissolved in a quart of water, will form a beverage, one draught of which will prove certainly fatal; but if the same quantity of arsenic is dissolved in twenty or thirty quarts of water, a man may take two or three draughts of such a liquor daily, for a week, without any danger or inconvenience; and if he had an intermittent fever before he began to it, he would be cured of that disease in a few days. The same quantity of arsenic dissolved in many tons of water, would produce no effect whatever on the human body, in any quantity in which a person could drink it. The case I believe is precisely the same with those vapours, effluvia, or volatile matters, which being diffusible in the air, may in it be diluted to any degree, and when much diluted become perfectly innocent, although when concentrated and strong they would have been absolutely poisonous, and even suddenly fatal. A considerable quantity of carbonic gas, commonly called fixed air, or of hydrogen gas, commonly called inflammable air, may be mixed with the common air that we breathe without the smallest danger to life, or any injury even to health. Nearly three fourths of common atmospheric air consists of a matter, (azote), which, if breathed

pure, would be certainly and almost instantly fatal ; yet when diluted with little more than a third part of its own quantity of a different kind of gas or air, (oxygen), it forms the most wholesome air for breathing. It has even been thought by some physicians, that a considerable quantity of those poisonous airs or vapours, moderately diluted with common air, may be very salutary in several diseases ; especially in the most common and fatal of all diseases in this country, consumption. I presume any ordinary person, however little skilled in chemistry, will understand, that if any ward of this Hospital were made close, and a very few ounces of sulphur were burned in it, every breathing animal in that ward would soon be killed by the poisonous suffocating vapour of that mineral ; but surely no person of common sense can believe, that if the doors and windows of such a ward were thrown open before such fumigation were begun, or during the performing of it, the vapours of the sulphur could reach any of the other wards, in such concentration and force, as to produce any diseases in the patients in these wards. As little can I believe, that the effluvia from patients in the fever-wards, prevented as they are from being accumulated by constant attention to cleanliness, and diluted and diffused in much air by constant ventilation, can ever be hurtful to the patients in the surgeons wards : and I know in fact, that there has never been the smallest proof or suspicion of their being hurtful to the patients in the physicians wards, who are at least as much exposed to them, as those under the care of the Surgeons. I heartily wish I could be as well assured, that equal security could be given by any other means to the other patients in the Hospital, when persons ill of such fevers are laid in the common wards, or to the other inhabitants of such houses as are generally occupied by the lower orders of people, when even one of the family is attacked by that disease. That such security, even in those circumstances, may be attained by very strict attention to ventilation and cleanliness,

linefs, I am well convinced; for by thefe means I have generally fucceeded, both in private houfes, and in the clinical wards of this Hofpital. I can well believe that others have been more uniformly fuccefsful in that refpect than I have been; but I think it right to acknowledge, that, after all the care I could take to prevent the fpreading of the contagion, I have feveral times been difappointed. The refult of my own experience is, that all the ventilation and cleanlinefs, not that *can*, but that generally *will* be employed in the common wards of an hofpital, does not give that complete fecurity to the other patients, which may be certainly attained by laying thofe ill of fevers in feparate wards; and that the chance of preventing the contagion from fpreading from one perfon ill of the fever to others of the fame family, among the lower orders of people, is ftill more precarious. I fhould think it right, that, by a ftanding order of the Managers, fuch patients fhould not be admitted into the common wards of this Infirmary; nay, that any patient in thefe wards attacked with fuch a fever after his admiffion, as muft often happen in confequence of his having been previously expofed to the caufes of the fever, fhould be removed from the common ward, into the one allotted for fever patients, or at leaft into fome of the private rooms connected with the different wards, fo as to cut off all communication between him and the other patients. With refpect to the fick poor in their own dwellings, it is in vain to propofe regulations which cannot be enforced; but they may at leaft be encouraged and inftructed to do what is right; nor fhould I think it a very difficult matter to make them underftand, that inftead of going into a great refervoir of infections, when they are admitted into the fever-wards of the Hofpital, they are in fact going out of fuch a refervoir, which they had produced, and were producing, in their own houfes: and, with refpect to the public at large, I fhould think it might be ftill more eafy to eftablifh the important doctrine, that,

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if such fevers are contagious, which I firmly believe, then, on the plan proposed, there very soon would not be left the hundredth part of the magazines of that contagion which there have long been scattered all over this city. Before I quit the subject of that theory of the origin of the hospital-gangrene, which Mr John Bell and his clients have so strongly asserted and sanctioned, I think it right to state the very precise and accurate observations of two different authors with respect to it. The first of these is Dr John Rollo, surgeon-general to the Royal Artillery, who, in a treatise, entitled, " A short account of a morbid poison acting on sores, " and of the method of destroying it," describes minutely the state of a sore, first, when acted upon by erysipelas; secondly, that of a sore supposed to be peculiar to hospitals, or what is called the hospital sore or gangrene; thirdly, that of a sore when acted upon by what he supposed to be a new species of morbid poison. Whatever may be thought of the accuracy of his observations, or the justness of his reasonings on these points, it seems at least abundantly plain, that those several bad conditions of sores which he describes were not produced by infections from the medical wards of this or any other hospital: for they occurred in the Brigade of Royal Horse-Artillery soon after its formation: when " many " accidents occurred, especially in kicks on the legs of the men by " the horses feet; and being generally on the shin, very unpleasant " sores were produced." So frequent were these accidents, that at one time they had seldom less than forty cases of sores in the hospital.

The second of those authors, whose observations on this subject I beg leave to quote, is one whose authority I am sure Mr John Bell will not dispute; namely, the said Mr John Bell himself: who in his splendid work, entitled, " The Principles of Surgery," published here a few months after his Answer to me, and the greater part of which must have been written, and probably printed, before

fore his Answer to me was written or thought of, has favoured the world with what may reasonably be supposed his real opinion of the nature and cause of the hospital-fore : at least he has given us many observations with respect to it, a minute description of its appearance and progress, and even an excellent coloured print, representing, far better than any words can do, the horror of the disease, and the deplorable situation of those whom it attacks. His observations seem to have been made chiefly on the men who had been wounded in the memorable engagement between the English and Dutch fleets, under the Admirals Duncan and De Winter, on the 11th of October 1797. The scene of his observations seems to have been the hospital at Yarmouth. He tells us expressly, that “ there is no hospital, however small, airy, or well regulated, where “ this epidemic ulcer is not to be found at times ; and then no operation dare be performed ! every cure stands still ! every wound “ becomes a fore, and every fore is apt to run into gangrene : ” then follows a noble philippic on its prevalence in the Hotel Dieu at Paris. (page 108). As to the causes of such a fore, he mentions, that a patient “ had been often drunk, was frequently “ revelling all night in the streets, and when day-light approached, he scrambled over the hospital-wall, or through the ditch “ full of mud. Frequent debauches, and the cold of winter, exposed him to the infection of the house ; he was weakened, fell “ sick, the hospital-fore spread over his thigh to a most dreadful “ degree, but wine and opiates, and careful living, brought him “ right again.” (page 111).

Then, after describing at great length the appearance and progress of the disease, and reasoning with much subtilty about the nature of it, he tells us, “ these are the consequences, not of that infection “ only which we call the hospital-gangrene, but of every debilitating cause. Drunkenness and debauchery, stomach-complaints, “ vomiting, diarrhoea, low spirits, the return of an old intermit-

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“ rent fever, the infection of dysentery, any debilitating cause, will produce a change in the appearance of a wound. But this infection of the hospital is the most irresistible of all.” Further, he tells us, “ Thus we see this disease confined within the walls of an hospital, nor does it always extend farther than a single ward. In Yarmouth, the English seamen who were wounded on the 11th of October, were divided from three hundred wounded men of the Dutch, by a wall only; the great wards were on the opposite sides of the partition under one roof; on the one side of that partition we operated on men and boys, opened sinuses, or searched for balls or pieces of shot, as freely as in the most healthy hospital, or in sick-quarters; not a fore was to be seen there, except such as were the inevitable consequence of gun-shot wounds, with carious bones. But on the other side of the partition wall, were such sores as are seldom to be seen, prohibiting all operations, even the most trivial.” (page 115. and 116).

If I had been left at liberty to contrive an account of the hospital-gangrene, with a view to show that it was not produced in the surgeons patients in this Infirmary by infections from the medical wards, I could have contrived nothing stronger for that purpose than what Mr John Bell himself has given us, in that great work from which the preceding passages are selected. In his whole disquisition on the subject, extending to twelve swinging quarto pages, no such opinion is asserted, or even insinuated; and the whole tenor of his observations irresistibly implies, that the disease in question might be produced, and was produced, in surgeons patients not exposed to any infections from medical wards; nay, even that it might occur, and at that time actually did occur, in some of the wards, but not in all of them, that were filled with surgery-patients, and under the peculiar or sole management of surgeons. It does not even appear that there were

were at that time in the naval hospital at Yarmouth any medical wards, whence infections could be derived ; but if there had been such wards in that town, and in that hospital, this would not account for the dreadful disease in question prevailing in one ward, and not in another, both of them filled with wounded men, both of them under the same roof, and separated only by a partition-wall. It will be admitted by every person who knows what physical reasoning is, that the hospital-fever prevailing at that time in some and not others of the wards of the Yarmouth hospital, occurring sometimes, but not always, in the artillery-hospital at Woolwich, occurring and spreading sometimes, but not always, in the surgeons wards of the Hospital at Edinburgh, must proceed from some cause common to all those hospitals, or wards of hospitals, at those times, and not from any thing peculiar to this Hospital, at all times, or at any time, such as the vicinity of the medical to the surgical wards, or the peculiar condition of the former.

But great and stupendous as is their proficiency in logical and physical science, the attainments of Mr John Bell and his clients in practical morality are still more astonishing, and more edifying. To judge rightly of their singular merit in this respect, candour requires that, in the first place, we should suppose that they *bona fide* believed what they had asserted and sanctioned : for the supposition, that they had asserted or sanctioned what they knew to be false, is so unfavourable to them, that it ought not to be admitted, or even thought of, without absolute necessity. Admitting then, for the sake of argument, that every thing which, in his Answer to me, Mr John Bell has said of the hospital-gangrene, is literally true, and by him, and all his clients, and all his professional brethren, believed or known to be so, let *us* consider, or rather let *them* consider, what their own conduct has been. From year to year, from generation to generation, they have *connived* at that horrible abomination ; they have allowed it to continue,

without even attempting to get it corrected, which it was their duty to have done as soon as they discovered the nature and source of it. The means of making this attempt were completely in their power : every Surgeon who attended in the Hospital, indeed every Surgeon in Edinburgh, had easy access to the Managers : by the charter of the Infirmary, at least *two* members of the College of Surgeons, but, if there be no Professor of Anatomy, then three of them, must always be Managers of this Hospital. If there had been any occasion for it, a unanimous resolution, and most urgent application, of the whole Royal College of Surgeons on that interesting subject, might have been presented to the Managers ; but these could not, and durst not have disregarded any information or request on such a subject, to which every consideration of honour, of duty, of humanity, required that they should pay the most prompt attention. When at last, after silently submitting to that grievance for more than half a century, and quietly permitting and conniving at the most cruel sufferings of many of their own patients, and the miserable death of several of them, they declare how cruelly their patients have been treated in this Infirmary, their complaint of these evils is not addressed privately to the Managers, in order to get them rectified without delay ; it is proclaimed to the public in a manner the best suited to excite general indignation and horror at the management of this Hospital, and, by necessary consequence, at the Physicians and the Managers of it. It cannot even be pretended that it was from any strong sense of the greatness of the evil, and the necessity and *difficulty* of getting it speedily reformed, that they took this violent and unnecessary measure : for they did it not *ex mero motu*, but on occasion of their being irritated by my former Memorial, and by my making generally known some circumstances of the conduct of their department in this Hospital, which I regarded as great and notorious evils, and wished to reform, and which they profess to think no evils at all, and wish to continue. They cannot pretend that

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the object of the Answer to my former Memorial was to get a *speedy reform* of that evil which they proclaimed so loudly ; for their object avowedly was to get the former system continued. They cannot even pretend that they did not see the practical inference necessarily resulting from their own state of the case ; for they mention it intelligibly enough, but slightly, rather flurring it over than urging it, and at least putting it off *sine die*. “ No, Gentlemen,” (says the eloquent Mr John Bell), “ we will represent, truly and “ impartially, the humane and very happy consequences resulting, “ not from an opposite but a separate hospital ! which, were your “ funds equal to the undertaking, we should think it our duty this “ day to advise.” Then follows the pathetic enumeration of all the evils to which they, or rather their patients, are exposed, by the very establishment of this Hospital, and by their predecessors, in the time of Deacon Kennedy & Co. uniting their separate Surgeons Hospital with the Royal Infirmary.

“ There are innumerable distresses resulting from the present “ combination of the medical and surgical institutes, and one especially which can never be done away. Our surgical hospital is “ in the highest, and not the most lofty, nor pleasant apartments “ of the Hospital. Every man whose limbs are fractured and lacerated must be carried up many flights of stairs : our operations “ are performed where patients, expecting the time of their own “ operations, are stupified with the cries of those who are suffering operations. Our surgical wards, sometimes neglected by “ students, are often crowded with the idle and curious, with “ those who are indifferent to surgery ; and they flow in upon us, “ chiefly when the cases are interesting, and patients ill able to “ bear the din, not of the regular students of surgery, but of a “ whole university of students. Surgery is not regarded as a particular study, but a piece of idle curiosity, and students come “ to see, rather than to be informed : The studies of surgery and

“ medicine are not duly divided.” Then he proceeds to tell us, that “ worse than all, their patients are exposed to infections “ from the medical wards, and especially to a disease, the hospital-fore,” &c. as already quoted, (page 324.). It is plain, from the whole tenor of his discourse in this most interesting passage, that he thinks the Surgeons entitled to claim great merit with the Managers and the public for their long forbearance, in allowing their patients to be exposed for more than half a century to all these numerous, horrid, and complicated evils, without any attempt on the part of the Surgeons to remonstrate with the Managers on the subject, or by any means whatever to get them corrected. They plainly are not things indifferent to the Managers, to the public, or to any person who has the understanding and the feelings of a man: they are surely not stated with a view to make himself, and his brethren, and his predecessors for sixty years, odious and infamous in the estimation of the public; nor can it even be believed that he and his clients, whose vote of thanks related *expressly*, and most particularly, to that part of his pamphlet, were sensible that such infallibly must be the effect of their own assertions if any credit was given to them. Their great or only anxiety, for more than sixty years, has been to establish and to preserve all those horrid abuses, by his own account so destructive to the patients; but at the same time to secure permission to every Member of their College to have his own equal share of that dreadful practice, which it was originally maintained they all required at first to make them expert operators, but which, according to their own account, could not have been for the good of the patients, and must have been fatal to many of them, by reason of the very unfavourable circumstances in which they were placed, and the poisonous infections to which they were exposed.

But, as if he had been resolved to leave nothing doubtful on so interesting a point; Mr John Bell takes care, in the two following paragraphs,

paragraphs, to state, by way of contrast to the evils which the Surgeons and their patients have suffered in the Infirmary, many of the great advantages which they, and their patients, and the public at large, would have enjoyed, if the Surgeons Hospital had never been united with the Royal Infirmary.

“ Had the Surgeons completed their plan of a distinct institution, we should have seen a far different order of things: the building of a small hospital would have been easily accomplished, and for so limited an institution its resources would have been great: the wards large and well aired; the patients comparatively few; their diet nourishing and generous; the house healthy, and free from infectious disease. This hospital, being the theatre of all the great operations in the city, would have been reputed a surgical school inferior to none: The Surgeons, sensible of the number of pupils gathering round them, would have begun to instruct them in the operations of surgery, and in those parts of anatomy which relate to operations: and not in surgery and anatomy only, but in the diseases which require operations, and in the infections, gangrenes, and fevers, which those who have suffered operations are exposed to.

“ Thus Surgery would have been distinguished from Medicine, and the Students would have felt the equal importance of both. Students, whatever their future destination, would have spent at least one year in this important study: many who now leave the University quite ignorant of this profession, would, by seeing the splendid state of the Surgical Hospital, be induced to attend its operations and its teachers. Such a school being attached to the Royal College of Surgeons, the profession itself would have assumed a more important aspect! Surgical operations and practice would have been improved! the members of this College would have applied with particular ardour both to their own profession and to general science. We think

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“ we may, with all possible modesty, put these down as the im-
 “ portant consequences of such an institution ; and have little rea-
 “ son to doubt, that the Surgeons would have become enthusiasts
 “ in their profession ; and surely they would have been faithful
 “ guardians of their own Hospital.”

Such being the inestimable advantages which the Surgeons and their patients have lost, and such the dreadful evils which their patients have incurred, by their connection with this Hospital ; what words can do justice to the unrelenting cruelty and atrocity of those, who so eagerly fought to establish that connection, who have so long connived at all its fatal consequences, and who still wish it to continue in all its horrors ? Let it be remembered that we are here considering the supposition, that Mr John Bell and his clients really believed what he has asserted, and they have sanctioned. If so, their conduct is too plain a commentary on that memorable resolution of their College already quoted, page 142. of this Memorial. They must indeed be *Shylocks*, or worse than *Shylocks* : for the cruelty of *Shylock* was directed against one man only, and one who had offended and insulted him ; but theirs must have brought misery and death on many hundreds who had never injured or offended them ; who, in the hour of affliction and bitterest anguish, had been intrusted to their charitable care, and for whom they pretended, and still pretend, the greatest benevolence, exalted and refined by a sacred regard to religion.

That I may do no injustice to them by these remarks, or appear to suppress any thing that may tend to lessen the indignation and horror which such conduct as theirs cannot fail to inspire, I must quote another paragraph, which, in Mr John Bell's pamphlet, immediately follows the one last quoted from it. His words are these : “ But this object is lost, and we will not torture you with expressions of regret. Yet, should Providence
 “ so order it, that this country, increasing in population, riches,
 “ and

“ and all good and charitable dispositions, should require a more
 “ extensive charity, we beseech you, when that period arrives, as
 “ most likely it will arrive, to revolve these considerations in your
 “ mind.” This sentence, like another already quoted, page 363.
 line 10. of this Memorial, shows plainly that they saw what
 ought instantly to have been the direct *practical inference* from
 their own assertions; but yet, for reasons which they best can ex-
 plain, that practical inference is put off to a distant and indefinite
 period.

Let us then consider, still on the supposition that they believed
 or knew that all their assertions were true, what the *immediate*
 and *very frequent* consequences must be of the continuance of
 that system, which they acknowledge to be bad, but do not
 propose to remove, for many years at least, perhaps for some
 generations.

As the hospital-gangrene, in consequence of infections from the
 medical wards, rages like a plague among the Surgeons patients
 twice a-year; and as during the time that it rages, which cannot
 be less than two or three weeks, and may be two or three months,
 each return, no operations can be safely performed, because it
 seizes *all* those who have even the *smallest incisions* practised upon
 them; as it infects all the ulcers, and changes the slightest sores
 into gangrenes; the fate of every patient admitted into the sur-
 geons wards at those times, must indeed be deplorable. He has
 scarce a chance for recovery; and the greatest probability of soon
 meeting a painful and lingering death. His situation must be
 greatly worse than that of a sheep going to the slaughter; which
 is the expression that Mr John Bell, in treating of this subject
 in his Principles of Surgery, (page 211, 212.), has with great deli-
 cacy and judgment employed. The condition of the patient when
 first brought into the Hospital may be such as to require the im-
 mediate performing of a capital operation, to give him his only
 chance

chance for his life. In such cases as fractured skull, strangulated rupture, mortified limb, or even a bad compound fracture or severe gun-shot wound, the several operations required cannot be postponed, *even for a day*, without almost certain death to the patients. Supposing them all to have been judiciously directed, and skilfully performed, so that the patients, bating the danger of hospital-gangrene, would have had a good chance for recovery, this chance must be lost in the certainty of the hospital-gangrene seizing them in a week, perhaps in less, with the greatest probability of its being fatal in less than a fortnight. The case must be nearly the same with the more numerous class of patients admitted into those wards on account of slight wounds and ulcers. These must soon be affected with the hospital-gangrene, which must spread, and very often prove fatal. But dying would be the least of the evils that such patients would meet with; to them death would be a relief from the most cruel sufferings. The hospital-gangrene is attended with excruciating burning pain; such pain, that it has been a *relief* to some patients to have the whole surface of the fore thoroughly seared with a red-hot iron. This was sometimes practised with success in the hospital at Lyons. In the progress of the disease, not only the skin is wasted, or rots away, to a vast extent, in a few days; but even the several portions of flesh (muscles) rot and separate from one another, and at last drop off; so that in many cases the bones of a limb have been left quite bare before the patient died. But in truth no words can convey an adequate notion of this dreadful disease: therefore, to supply that defect, and also to preclude any suspicion of my having exaggerated the evil, I beg leave to refer the curious or distrustful reader to the ample description given of the hospital-gangrene, in the Principles of Surgery, by Mr John Bell himself, (page 108. to 119.), where he will find not only a very full general description of the disease, but several particular cases of it minutely described

scribed, and best of all, a coloured print, a portrait of the disease, and of a wretched creature dying of it; one *Joiner*, a boy belonging to the *Triumph*, and wounded on the memorable 11th of October 1797, and in his last sad scene exhibiting some of the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war. It is plain from that print, that Mr John Bell understood and felt perfectly the force of Horace's maxim,

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*

This maxim, and his print, on the present occasion, serve my purpose as well as his. Let no persons of weak nerves, nor any lady with child, look at that print: but let those who have no such reasons to fear its strong effect look steadily on it, and know, that if what Mr John Bell has so confidently asserted, and his clients have so strongly and openly sanctioned, be true, such is *one* of the evils which their predecessors brought on those patients for whom they professed such pious and tender care; which every Surgeon, from Deacon Kennedy and his friends to Mr John Bell and his friends or clients, who in the course of sixty years has attended and operated in this Hospital, has quietly connived at; and which these gentlemen most piously and humanely propose to allow to continue, till " Providence shall so order it, that this country, " increasing in population, riches, and all good and charitable dispositions, shall require a more extensive charity."—Or do they wish it to be considered as one of those little inconveniences to which they alluded in that eloquent and pathetic sentence, wherein they tell us, that " even humanity herself must dispense with some " of those comforts which she would wish to heap upon the " fortunate objects of her care?" If so, then *Timeo Danaos et dona*

ferentes, in whatever language it may be expressed, must ever be the heartfelt sentiment of all those truly unfortunate objects.

I formerly hinted (page 102.) my suspicion, that the Spirit of Deacon Kennedy still rested on some of his successors; having descended to them along with his cloak. The cloak is easily known; notwithstanding the profusion of lace and embroidery with which Mr John Bell has adorned it, and the large border of zeal for science with which he has tried to eke it out. Every body must recognise it at once as the good old thread-bare covering, which has been slave to thousands, and has covered, and will cover men of every shape and every size; all but the cloven foot, which never can be long concealed, and from which a shrewd guess may be made of the nature and intents of that Spirit; be they wicked or charitable; bring it airs from Heaven, or blasts from Hell. We are all, I I presume, pretty well accustomed to get a glimpse of the said cloven foot, on certain occasions; and generally expect to see it peeping out under the hem of that cloak which Mr John Bell wears with such becoming grace; but probably, till his pamphlet appeared, none of us ever had the cloven foot so boldly dashed in our faces, or ever had so complete a view of it in its full size and proportion. *Ex pede Herculem* and *Ex ungue leonem*, are well-known and just maxims. From so goodly a cloven foot what vast ideas must we have of the person to whom it belongs? if indeed it belong to him, and not he to it. But I doubt much whether he be not rather a part of the cloven foot, than the cloven foot a part of him: for if it were taken away, it is difficult to conceive what, or how much, or whether any thing of Mr John Bell would remain. But this curious problem in Demonology will perhaps be solved by an attentive consideration of the next and only other article of his pamphlet on which I intend to offer any remarks.

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In the mean time I must point out, that all these very unfavourable inferences with respect to him and his clients are just, and necessarily true, only on the supposition, that they had all *believed* what he asserted, and they sanctioned, with respect to the origin of the hospital-gangrene, and the prevalence of it in the surgeons wards of this hospital. But it is conceivable that neither he nor they believed what he asserted and they sanctioned: and they are unquestionably entitled, in strict and candid reasoning, to take their choice of either side of the dilemma, which they have so logically and judiciously contrived for themselves. But one or other of the suppositions they *must* take: there *can be no third* supposition with respect to their conduct. It is impossible to get out of such a dilemma: which briefly stands thus.

Either they believed, or they did not believe, what he asserted and they sanctioned. If they did not believe it, they must all be infamous for deliberately and seriously asserting a malevolent falsehood. If they did believe it, they must be still more infamous, and moreover ought all to be hanged, for knowingly and deliberately allowing so many of their patients, year after year, to die a lingering and painful death, by breathing air which they knew to be poisonous. Their guilt, and the atrocity of their conduct, would be just the same as if they had knowingly allowed an equal number of their patients to die by eating poisoned bread, or drinking poisoned water. There are no laws to punish a crime which no lawgiver could foresee, or think possible: therefore they will escape hanging: but they cannot escape curses both loud and deep, if they persist in that assertion, which necessarily implies such unrelenting and atrocious cruelty in their own past and present conduct.

I come now to the last, but not the least important article, of Mr John Bell's Answer to my Memorial, on which I think it necessary to make any remarks: I mean the wonderful and very eloquent account, that he has been pleased to give, of the Clinical Lectures, and of the atrocious wanton cruelty with which they are conducted. This part of his pamphlet is by far the most splendid sample of his genius that I have ever seen; and much more than enough to make his name immortal, if he had never written another page. It is of such consequence in discussing this point, to preclude even the possibility of any suspicion that I misrepresent or suppress any part of his discourse, that, tedious as it may appear to some persons, I must transcribe full six pages of his pamphlet; between the 42d and the 49th page of the 2d section of it. Let it be observed, that this is the section of his pamphlet which seems, in a peculiar manner, to have obtained, as it certainly merited, the highest approbation and gratitude of his friends and clients; for to it their vote of thanks is particularly directed. (See Preface to this Memorial.) It must therefore be understood by every person who reads his pamphlet and their vote of thanks, that every thing atrocious, marvellous, and almost incredible, which he has asserted with respect to the Clinical Lectures, is fully adopted and sanctioned by them; and that they, individually and collectively, vouch for the truth of every thing that he has asserted, as what they believed or knew to be true. Let it be observed also, that the account which he has given of the Clinical Lectures, or rather of the conduct of the Clinical Professors in their practice in the Hospital, is stated evidently by way of contrast to the very different conduct of the Surgeons in their department, and plainly with a view to represent their practice, and their conduct towards their patients as kindness and humanity, compared to what the patients experience who fall under the care of the Clinical Professors.

“ *Of the ESSENTIAL and CONSTITUTIONAL CONNECTION
of the MEDICAL SCHOOL of EDINBURGH with the ROYAL
INFIRMARY.*

You may easily imagine, Gentlemen, how invaluable a benefit it is to our profession, to have a practical school, since the University itself was imperfect, until it had attained a connection with this Hospital. It is necessary that young physicians be made familiar with the symptoms of fever, the appearances of eruptions, the varieties of the pulse, the affections of respiration, the changes of the eye, complexion, and countenance, and all the visible characters of inward disease: and it becomes the duty of the medical professor to teach practically, not only the genuine practice, but the various theories of medicine. For the performing of these duties, Clinical Wards are appointed: this is the department of your Hospital which we now proceed to explain; and we hope, that no expression of ours will be interpreted as disrespectful to that department of teaching and practice, which we consider as peculiarly honourable to those who fulfil the duty, as the most useful part of that course of education, which has made this school of medicine esteemed above any in Europe.

The period was most honourable to the patrons and managers of this charity, and ever to be remembered, when, indifferent to vulgar prejudice, and undismayed by popular clamour, they permitted this very important department of public teaching to be assimilated with their Hospital. The university had no proper hospital, no accumulated funds, no patronage to bestow; they had every thing to ask of your liberality, and nothing to give in return, but that benefit which would accrue to humanity and science from this new mode of instruction. Regardless of every thing, but

- but the general interests of science, you received within your walls
- (6) a department which could bring along with it nothing but public odium ; with most commendable liberality, you established the Clinical Professors in privileges fully equal to those claimed by the
 - (7) Royal College of Surgeons : you allotted them also wards, superior in every respect to those of the surgeons.
 - (8) As for experiments in surgery ; we know of none ; it is a department of practice too plain and simple not to have settled principles : the rules of our science ascertain, with tolerable precision, where an operation is necessary. When a white swelling is plainly incurable, it is no experiment to cut off the limb, and there is but one
 - (9) way in which the operation can be performed ! but it is an experiment,
 - (10) and a bold one too, when arsenic is given to cure that slight intermitting fever which bark and wine will positively cure.

- It is unquestionably true, that the teaching and demonstrating by experiment the best and most approved practice, must be, upon the whole, advantageous to the sick ; yet the making professed trial of every practice is not so ! it is only on the presumption of
- (11) general good, that, in this instance, experiments, which must be a partial evil, are allowed. We unequivocally approve, in the
 - (12) practice of the medical profession, a latitude which we dare not admit in our own : we unequivocally declare, that we think a clinical ward the most useful part of a medical institute ; yet there are many, above the rank of the vulgar, who will be always doubtful whether your delegated powers, as managers of a public
 - (13) charity, extend thus omnipotently over the lives of your fellow-creatures.

- The university could never, by any public nor private exertion, by its influence, its riches, or the report of its good intentions, and the benefit intended to science, have erected this most necessary
- (14) part of the medical school. A distinct Clinical Hospital is a thing quite

quite unknown ; such an undertaking never was attempted : though a laudable institution, a Clinical Hospital must be shrouded (15) from the public eye. A Clinical Hospital, erected with the avowed design of receiving desperate and forlorn cases ! of practising ex- (16) periments ! of teaching the profession to young physicians ! of proving the hypotheses of medicine ! and trying, by experience, (17) the efficacy of drugs, will never pass upon the world for a mere charity. Such an institution would be looked upon with jealousy by the rich, and by the poor with horror. Those who entered, by sad necessity, into such a hospital, would believe themselves every way lost ; and those who died, would be thought to have suffered. Gentlemen, it is to your liberal constructions of the design of such an institution, and to your regard for science and the general interests of humanity, that we owe the benefits of the Clinical Wards and Lectures. Your motives for allowing this dangerous innova- (18) tion were pure and open. No busy searcher into the records of your Infirmary can prove, on this occasion, a pactum illicitum ! a present of money ! an actual reward for the perversion of the judgment ! a logical, or a real bribe ! No, the university had nothing to give, and every thing to gain.

So it happened, however, that Clinical Wards were appointed, and lectures on the cases of the patients were given in your Hospital ; a thing unknown in London, or in other schools ! and books (19) of experiments, under the undisguised name of CLINICAL EXPERIMENTS, were published by the Professors of the university, (20) and trials of new medicines, and new methods of cure, made on the good people of this city : for what end ? not for the instruction of our own native surgeons, but for the instruction of young men, convened by the celebrity of the school, from all parts of the world.

What then is the nature of this new department, ingrafted thus upon the original constitution of this Hospital ? What unbought privileges have the professors of the university acquired ?—They, without

- without any exertion to erect a school, have found one in your wards ! and without the invidious name of Clinical Hospital, they
- (21) have a safe place where they can make experiments, as dangerous, as long continued, as expensive as they please ! without a new institution to support, they receive the fees of the numerous pupils, and without adding to the funds of the house, (since those pupils pay to the infirmary no more than the ordinary fees), they have
 - (22) possession of wards, larger and better appointed than those allotted to our surgical department : Without their purpose being observed,
 - (23) they can go into the waiting-room, and mark out the most dangerous diseases as the subjects for their practice. Sometimes when patients, having uncommon diseases, are received by the ordinary
 - (24) physicians, they are reclaimed by the Clinical Professors, the rightful lords of the manor ! At one time fevers, at another palsies, at
 - (25) another time hydrogies or convulsions, are in request ! The Hospital itself, and all its patients, are at the command of the Clinical Professors ! they walk in among these patients ! look at them !
 - (26) hang their nosological labels and tallies round their necks ! and send them to their own wards, there to prick off the lines of the prevail-
 - (27) ing doctrines upon their bodies.

Let us now apply to this department of the practical school, the observations and criticisms of your enterprising Memorialist. " The surgeons," says he, " succeed each other in rapid succession every two months." It is true, but where the surgeon is changed, his assistant usually succeeds him ! Each surgeon begins to attend the Infirmary a month before his term of duty arrives, and he does not cease to attend till those upon whom he has performed any great operation are well. Though the surgeon is changed every two months, the patients are permanent ; the practice is steady, rational, and consistent ; numbers of surgeons are in constant attendance in the consultation room, to assist the attending surgeon with their advice ; he often appeals to them, and there
feldom

feldom passes a day in which he does not bring patients with various complaints into the consulting room; either to consult about their cases when they are received, to remark, to his fellow-surgeons, any remarkable changes in their diseases, or to show their condition before they are discharged.

But in the Clinical Ward, the physician in attendance is always alone and unassisted; his office is indeed of such a nature as will (29) not allow of advice or assistance. Each winter two physicians take charge of these wards, and each attends but a little more than two months. The first physician comes out in November, fills his wards, affords his diseases, writes notes and regular reports of his patients' complaints; completes his experiments, lectures on their cases, and then empties these wards, by delivering his patients over to the ordinary physicians, or by actually dismissing them from the house. Is it not happy for these poor people, that they have not the sensibilities and delicacies of people bred in the higher ranks of life? This is a kind of teaching, in which the demonstrator chalks his lines and diagrams on the board, till, having demonstrated too much at once, his lines become perplexed! (30) but he takes his sponge, and wipes all clear for some new demonstration.

These being professed experiments, it is not usual for the second professor to complete the experiments, or pursue the practice of the first. The wards which are opened in November are emptied in January, in February they are filled again! Then come new patients, new cases, new experiments, new doctrines, and a new Professor! all these things are changed, and "the WHALE" finds itself sporting in a fresh element, with NEW TUBS of all forms and dimensions, floating around it.

But if experience be required, in what station should it be more desirable, than in conducting a clinical ward; where good sense, prudence, discretion, and professional knowledge are all needful? It

is the part of the Hospital to which the most hopeless and desperate
 (31) cases are conveyed ; the stage of perpetual experiments ; the scene upon which the public eye is fixed ; the department of your institution, where popular prejudices are most to be feared. It is the school, too, where the physician not only practises on his fellow-creatures, but instructs, at once, hundreds of young men, and extends the errors or benefits of his own practice to distant
 (32) times and countries.

Where, in all the circle of medical teaching, in schools, colleges,
 (33) or hospitals, is there a more important charge ? Let the Memorialist remember by which of the professors these duties are fulfilled ! and learn to speak discreetly of us, though we are young men !”

Before I offer any remarks on the particular passages of this admirable philippic, which passages I have pointed out by marginal numbers, I think it necessary to premise a few observations on the general tenor of it, and that kind of misrepresentation which pervades it from end to end.

In the first place, then, it must be obvious to every person, that he has uniformly employed the term *clinical* as synonymous with *empirical* or *experimental*. He has not indeed defined or explained it, but he has uniformly employed it in this sense ; so uniformly, that no person who did not previously know the meaning of the word, or who had never even seen it or heard it but in the passage quoted from Mr John Bell's Answer to me, could ever suspect that it had any other meaning : but in truth that is not the meaning of the word *clinical*, nor, to the best of my knowledge and belief, was it ever used in that sense by any person but Mr John Bell himself.

If this mistake or perversion of the meaning of a common medical word proceeded from ignorance in Mr John Bell, and if the sanctioning of it by their vote of thanks proceeded from corresponding

ponding ignorance in his clients, it would be indeed a deplorable example of medical men using one of their commonest professional words without understanding it; but it would not imply any dissingenuity or wilful misrepresentation on their part. It would be just like the common blunder of the patients and the nurses in the clinical wards, who, ignorant not only of the meaning but of the spelling of the word, often call them the *trinical*, and sometimes the *trinity* wards. But as such ignorance could not account for their uniformly using the word clinical in a sense totally different from its own, and one grossly unfavourable to the Clinical Professors, and to the Managers of the Infirmary, I can hardly believe that the conduct of Mr John Bell and his clients in this respect proceeded from honest ignorance: but if they wish to avail themselves of such a miserable excuse, they are heartily welcome; my opinion is to be understood as expressed with a *salvo jure* to them.

The word Clinical, by its derivation and original meaning, as well as by the uniform use and application of it in the conversation and writings of Physicians, has always been understood to mean that kind of medical practice and instruction which relates to patients labouring under such acute or other dangerous diseases as to be almost or wholly confined to bed. It is derived from the Greek word *cline*, which signifies a bed, and the word *clinical*, as used in this medical school, the first in these kingdoms in which Clinical Lectures were given, relates properly to certain medical lectures; but by a natural and almost inevitable latitude of speech, is extended to the patients whose cases are the subjects of those lectures, to those wards of the Hospital in which these patients are entertained, and even to the Professors who read those lectures. Clinical Lectures are practical medical lectures, which differ from the general systematic lectures on the practice of physic, in this respect, that while in the latter the Professor treats of the several diseases to

which the human body is subject, considered in a general view, without any reference to the peculiarities that may take place in individual patients ; in the former, the Clinical Lectures, the Professor endeavours to point out to his pupils the peculiarities in the case of every individual patient with respect to the causes, the symptoms, the progress, the probable event, and the actual termination of the disease ; the reasons for employing a particular plan of cure, for choosing certain remedies, for varying the administration of these, or in some cases for changing them altogether and employing other remedies : and he endeavours to point out and to distinguish those symptoms, whether usual or accidental, that proceed from the disease, and those, favourable or unfavourable, common or uncommon, which proceed from the remedies employed.

In short, the Clinical Lectures are just a commentary on the practice which the Professor employs on the patients under his care : and according to the most strict and literal meaning of clinical lectures, they ought to be delivered actually at the bed-side of the patients. To a certain degree this is really done, in the form of those full reports, as they are called, or descriptions of the state of the patient, the progress or change of symptoms, and the effects of remedies ; which reports are generally made more full and particular by the Clinical Professors than it is necessary, or even possible, for the ordinary Physicians of the Hospital to make them with respect to their patients, who are so much more numerous. Nay, occasionally, in the clinical wards, remarks are made by the Professors, and the attention of the students is particularly called to many little circumstances as they occur, which cannot be explained by any description, or learned in any other way but by actual observation. But the impropriety of carrying very far this kind of clinical instruction must be obvious. Even the indelicacy, or in many cases the cruelty, of speaking freely of the nature and danger

danger of the diseases in the hearing of the patients themselves, must preclude all thoughts of delivering full clinical lectures at their bed-sides. The time unavoidably required for such lectures would make them very distressing to the patients, as well as highly inconvenient to the Professor and the students: and it may fairly be presumed, that the lectures will be in every respect at least as good, and in many respects much better, when the Professor is allowed some time to prepare them, by collecting and arranging his thoughts, by consulting different authors whose observations and reasonings tend to illustrate the subjects of the lectures; nay, even by comparing or contrasting together the cases of several patients labouring under the same or similar diseases, which often tend greatly to explain and illustrate one another.

Such explanations and commentaries, on the part of a physician who practises in an hospital, must always be useful to the students who were observing and learning his practice, and to many of them must be absolutely necessary. A student of good talents, who has already made considerable progress in the study of physic, and who has even seen a good deal of practice, either in hospitals or in private, may very probably understand, without the help of any explanation or commentary, all that the Professor can tell him in his lectures: but this cannot be the case with all the students, nor indeed with any of them at first. A student just beginning to see actual practice may not know what the disease is which he sees, even though a simple one; or if he knows what the disease is called, he may have very erroneous, imperfect, or confused notions of the nature, the causes, the progress, and the probable terminations of it: he must be still more at a loss when any uncommon accidental symptoms occur in such a disease; and most of all, when two or more diseases, as often happens, are combined at once in the same person: he may be much at a loss to know the import of many symptoms, as favourable or unfavourable, and even to distinguish
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between the symptoms of the disease and the effects of the remedies employed: he may scarce understand the general purpose or plan of cure which the Physician adopts, and very generally can have no notion of the reasons for which a Physician employs certain remedies, in preference to others of the same kind; of his reason for giving those medicines in a certain manner, as to form, and dose, and repetition, and for changing occasionally, not only the mode of administering the remedies, but the remedies altogether, and for trying others perhaps of a very different kind. These are the purposes of clinical lectures; and for these and no other purposes did the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, more than fifty years ago, give permission to the Professors of Physic to read clinical lectures on the cases of some of the patients admitted into this Hospital.

Nothing more than that kind of practice most innocent with respect to the patients, and that kind of instruction most useful with respect to the students, ever was intended by the Managers, in permitting the institution of Clinical Lectures, or understood or accepted by the Professors in discharging the duties of that important office. It would be absurd to set about proving that such clinical lectures cannot be injurious or dangerous; but it is worth while to point out, as this may not be obvious to every person, that they cannot fail, every thing else being equal, to prove highly beneficial to the patients. It must not be considered as a reflection injurious to the ordinary physicians of this or of any other hospital; for I have no such thought, when I say that it would be for the benefit of all patients, in hospitals and not in hospitals, if their physicians were obliged to read Clinical Lectures on their cases. I do not know, nor can I conceive, any human contrivance, that can more effectually and irresistibly oblige the physician to study carefully the case of his patient; to attend to every symptom or change of symptom in it; to exert himself to the utmost for his patient's

patient's relief, and at the same time to be as cautious as possible in the remedies that he employs; than to find himself under the necessity of giving a minute account of every thing that he has done, in a very public manner, and before a number of competent judges. I do not mean to say that such a system ever can be established, or that in general it is necessary on account of the ignorance, laziness, indifference, negligence, or rashness of physicians: but I say with confidence, that if such a system were established no patient could suffer by it, and many would profit greatly. Such little deficiencies as I have mentioned, though not common, are not quite unknown in physicians, whose patients must sometimes have suffered severely by them; which they would not have done, if their physicians had been *compelled* to that strict attention, and persevering exertion, which are absolutely indispensable in Clinical Professors. These professors can have no more pretensions to infallibility than other physicians: like other physicians, but I presume not more, they must sometimes err in their judgment, and be unsuccessful in their practice: but I am sure they cannot incur the suspicion of laziness, negligence, or rashness. Their own fame and fortune are so completely and immediately at stake, that if they were by nature unfeeling and rash, and by habit lazy and negligent, they would find themselves, by their situation, roused to those exertions and cautions, which a sense of duty and every humane and honourable consideration require of every physician.

What I have here stated as the necessary consequence of the institution of Clinical Lectures, or some other corresponding system, which may be supposed, though it cannot be put in practice, with respect to all physicians, is in a great measure verified with respect to the practice of the ordinary Physicians in this Hospital; whose daily visits, whose regular reports of the cases of the patients in the presence of a number of students, many of whom are well qualified to judge of all that they see and hear, are almost equivalent

equivalent to the obligation of reading Clinical Lectures. Of the great and good effect of this part of our Hospital system those can best judge who have seen how differently the practice of the physicians is conducted in some other hospitals; in which the physicians do not see their patients every day, perhaps only once a week; in which they give no reports of the history and progress of their diseases; and in which they do not act under the inspection of so many, so well informed, and such formidable judges of their conduct.

Corresponding to that account which Mr John Bell has given of *Clinical Lectures* and instruction, and evidently intended to make a part of it, is the notion that he strongly insinuates, of the nature of those *experiments* of which he wishes to represent the patients under the care of the Clinical Professors as the miserable victims. This part of his discourse is made the more horrible by being cautiously expressed in obscure general terms, which strongly convey the meaning of something dreadfully bad: too bad perhaps to be mentioned particularly; and therefore to be left in a great measure to the imagination of the tender-hearted reader. But that no reader's imagination might take a *wrong* direction, and indulge a pleasing dream that those *experiments* of the Clinical Professors were only the faithful and public discharge of that well-known and indispensable duty which every physician owes to all his patients, both in hospitals and in private; of that duty which every person of sense *expects*, and which many persons, when themselves, or their families, or their friends are sick, *demand* of their physicians, often too hastily and importunately; namely, that they should first employ those remedies, that is, *try* those *experiments*, which they think safest and most likely to be successful, but, failing these, should *try* other remedies, even though less promising, and more rough, and more dangerous; in short, that they should leave nothing *untried* that may give their patients their best or only chance

chance for recovery or relief;—Mr John Bell has most judiciously and kindly assisted, and directed the wandering imaginations of his gentle readers, by such hints as these: “that it becomes the duty of the medical Professors to teach practically, not only the genuine practice, but the *various theories* of medicine: that for the performing of these duties clinical wards are appointed: that the Managers, *indifferent to vulgar prejudice*, and *undismayed by popular clamour*, and *regardless of every thing but the general interests of science*, permitted this very important department to be assimilated with their Hospital: that though the teaching and demonstrating by experiment the best and most approved practice must be upon the whole advantageous to the sick, yet the making professed *trial of every practice is not so*: that a distinct clinical hospital is a thing quite unknown; such an undertaking never was attempted; though a laudable institution, a clinical hospital must be *shrouded from the public eye*: A clinical hospital, erected with the avowed design of receiving desperate and forlorn cases, of *practising experiments*, of teaching the profession to young physicians, of proving the *hypotheses* of medicine, and trying by *experience the efficacy of drugs*, will never pass upon the world for a mere charity; such an institution would be looked upon with *jealousy* by the rich, and by the poor with *horror*; those who enter by sad necessity into such an hospital, would believe themselves *every way lost*, and those who died would be thought to have *suffered*. They (the Professors) have a safe place where they can *make experiments*, as *dangerous*, as long continued, as expensive as they please: As for experiments in surgery, we know of none. It is a department of practice too plain and simple not to have settled principles: but it is an *experiment*, and a *bold one* too, when *arsenic* is given to cure that slight intermittent fever which bark and wine will positively cure,” &c. This is the only particular instance which he has thought fit to give, of that kind of practice, and those experi-

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ments, which he represents as the peculiar purpose of the clinical wards, and the proper duty of the Clinical Professors.

From these few specimens that I have quoted, and still better from the whole tenor of his discourse, quoted verbatim, page 373. to 378. of this Memorial, every reader may judge for himself what notion of the business of the clinical wards, and of the conduct of the Clinical Professors, and indeed of the Managers of the Infirmary, Mr John Bell wished to give the public; but let it be remembered always, that the horrible institution, which he describes in such strong terms, is, at the same time, made the subject of his highest and almost extravagant encomiums. For what purpose these encomiums are lavished on it, he best can explain; but it is at least abundantly evident, that he wishes to represent the Managers as having given, and the Clinical Professors as having accepted and actually employed in their practice, a latitude with respect to their professional conduct, which physicians are not allowed in their ordinary practice, either in private or in hospitals; and which in this Hospital at least the Managers did not allow to the ordinary physicians. Nay, Mr John Bell has had the singular goodness and liberality to declare, that he and his brethren unequivocally approve in the practice of the medical profession, a *latitude* which they dare not admit in their own.

With respect to clinical wards, and clinical lectures, at least in the Royal Infirmary, and the University of Edinburgh, I may without vanity suppose that I know as much as most men living. For more than thirty years I have been well acquainted with those wards, and in the last six-and-twenty years I have myself conducted twenty courses of clinical lectures, of three months each; implying my having treated in the clinical wards about two thousand patients: and I declare, solemnly and unequivocally, that I never understood, that the Clinical Professors had any such peculiar latitude in their conduct, or any peculiar power or privilege

lege of trying experiments on their patients, or of teaching practically the various theories of medicine. I never understood, or heard, nor can I even now, after perusing Mr John Bell's high encomium on the Managers for their very liberal conduct, believe that the said Managers *could* give such a permission or such latitude to the Clinical Professors. They certainly could neither absolve themselves from their own solemn oath, to discharge faithfully their duty as Managers of the Hospital, nor absolve the Clinical Professors from the oath which they had taken when first permitted to act as physicians. They could not even give these Professors, supposing them to have taken no such oath, a dispensation from the well-known duties of their profession. These duties, and the oath by which they are usually enforced, make no distinction between rich patients and poor; between those in private houses and those in a great hospital; between those in the common wards and those in the clinical wards of this Infirmary. I do not believe that any Manager of the Infirmary ever thought of giving, or any Professor of accepting, such a horrible dispensation; any more than they would have thought of giving or accepting a dispensation from the Ten Commandments, from the laws of their country, from allegiance to their Sovereign, and from every moral duty. But supposing, for the sake of argument, that at the time when the clinical lectures were first established, such a dispensation, or permission, was given by the Managers, and that it has been continued by all their successors in that important trust for fifty years; and that it was accepted by all the Clinical Professors, and that all of them have availed themselves of it in their practice: then I say with confidence, that, far from deserving those high encomiums which Mr John Bell has bestowed upon them, and which his clients have so strongly sanctioned, every such Manager and Professor, and every person who approves of such conduct, *ought to be hanged*. Nay, I will go one step farther, and give it as my

opinion, that every person who entertains any doubts on that point, also deserves to be hanged: for Mr John Bell has been pleased to say, after praising in the highest terms the conduct of the Managers, “ Yet there are many above the rank of the vulgar, “ who will be always doubtful, whether your delegated powers as “ Managers of a public charity, extend thus omnipotently over “ the lives of your fellow-creatures.”

As the most complete proof that I can give of what I have always understood to be the purpose of Clinical Lectures, and the duty of the Clinical Professors in their hospital-practice, I shall give here the exact words of that part of my introductory Clinical Lecture which relates to my general plan of practice in the Infirmary, and the trying of experiments on the patients. That lecture, and especially this passage of it, though never printed, I consider as having long been published; for I am sure it will be recognised by many hundreds of my pupils, some of whom I hope will take the trouble to compare it with their own manuscript copies of it. A great part of that lecture was occasionally varied; but this passage was never omitted, when I began the clinical course; because I thought it of peculiar importance, for moral as well as physical reasons.

“ With respect to my general plan of practice in the clinical wards, the rule which I have laid down to myself ever since I entered on the exercise of my profession, to which I mean always to adhere, and which I should most earnestly recommend to you all, at least till you have learned by some years experience *quid ferre recusent, quid valeant humeri*, is to begin with the simplest, safest, and most approved method of cure; even though it be the commonest.

“ Such is the method, that duty to his patients, or a regard to their safety, as well as prudence, or a regard to his own interest and character,

character, will oblige every practitioner, and more especially every young practitioner, to employ.

“ If it succeeds, you cannot have a better or a more useful lesson. If it fails, then is the time for varying our practice, and trying new experiments ; for then it is not only allowable, but incumbent on every Physician, however limited his knowledge and small his experience may be, to alter his method, which he finds is not likely to succeed, and to try another, and another, in hopes of better success. But even these trials are not to be made indiscriminately, or rashly, or at random.

“ The Physician should have at least some probable, though he can never have any certain grounds, on which to proceed : in other words, he should have some reasons for the trials that he makes, and for the preference that he gives to certain remedies. If he has already had any experience of their good effects in similar disorders, even though success has not always attended their use, he need not hesitate about giving them. If he is informed from authority that he thinks respectable, for he must not give too much credit to the information of the vulgar, the ignorant, and the interested, that a remedy has been found highly serviceable in a particular disease, he is entitled, and I think it is his duty, to give it a trial. Even without any experience or information to guide him, if, from his knowledge of the nature of the disease, and his opinion of the powers of any untried remedy, of which he may form at least a probable conjecture from its sensible qualities, its chemical properties, and its resemblance or affinity to medicines of known efficacy, that it is likely to be of service in such a disease, and at the same time is convinced that it may be administered with safety to the patient, he ought unquestionably to give it a trial. Such is the *right*, and the *duty*, of every rational Physician ; and such is the method by which, with caution and attention, and accurate observation, joined to professional knowledge and natural acuteness,

acuteness, he may expect, at the same time, to improve the practice of his art, and to extend the limits of his science.

“ With respect to all experiments to be tried on patients, give me leave to recommend to you the short and comprehensive precept, which my Father used to give to all his pupils, “ Never to try “ an experiment on any of them which you would not wish to “ have tried on yourselves, or on those who were dearest to “ you, if you or they were in the same situation with your patients.”

“ I have insisted the more strongly on this point, of the experiments that may with propriety be made on patients, because I know that many Students entertain a very erroneous notion of the nature and purpose of Clinical practice, and Clinical instruction; and imagine the Physician and Professor is left at liberty, if not absolutely obliged, to try whatever experiments he may think fit with a view to the improvement of his science, and the instruction or amusement of his pupils. But you must consider that the recovery of our patients is the principal, and your instruction only a secondary object, in a course of Clinical Lectures. I shall always think I give you the best instruction in my power, when I show you the simplest, safest, and most effectual practice, with which I am acquainted.

“ It often happens, that gentlemen attending my lectures think of remedies, even such as are well known, which did not occur to me; and sometimes are acquainted with remedies, and have been witnesses of their good effects, of which remedies I had never heard, or at least had never had any experience. I shall gladly receive, and shall think myself obliged to you for, any information of that kind, which any of you may give me. In consequence of such an offer, on former occasions, I have frequently received assistance from my pupils, and have employed some of the remedies that they recommended to me with great success. Observe, however,

I do not engage to try every remedy that may be proposed to me in this way ; but I engage either to employ it, or to give my reason for not employing it.

“ You will have frequent opportunities of observing that I am somewhat slow to change the remedies, or plan of cure, which I have once adopted, unless in urgent cases, even though my success at first is not very encouraging ; and that I often attempt rather to vary the administration of the medicines first directed, by altering the form, and increasing or diminishing the quantity of them. I hope you will not rashly condemn this conduct, or attribute it to pride and obstinacy in me, or to a wilful perseverance in a practice which I found unsuccessful, because I was ashamed to alter it, and confess that I had been in the wrong. That I may be partial to my own opinions, and to certain remedies, and that I may be mortified when they do not answer, I shall not presume to deny. But I do not think that a bigotted attachment to particular remedies is my common or principal error. I hope therefore you will do me the justice to believe, that a seeming perseverance in an unsuccessful practice often proceeds from a very different motive ; from a real conviction that it is necessary, in justice to our patients, to give our remedies a fair trial, both in point of quantity and time. Frequent changes of medicines, instead of giving a patient many chances for recovery, leave him none at all ; but harass him to no purpose, and exhaust his strength : nay, the medicines given in that manner often counteract each others effects. Many good remedies prove useless, by being underdosed ; many others fail to succeed, by not being employed for a sufficient time. It is the nature of many powerful remedies to act very slowly on the constitution, even when their effects at last are the most salutary and permanent : and it is the nature of some diseases to yield very slowly even to the most active remedies. Since, then, I mean always to begin with that plan of cure and those medicines which I think
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most likely to succeed, you cannot expect that I should change it suddenly, or till I find that it is likely to fail ; unless some circumstance either occurs to myself, or is suggested to me by you, which shows the expediency or necessity of altering my plan. In such cases, you may be assured that it shall be altered immediately.

“ I shall make no apology for the feebleness of my practice on many occasions, and for the frequent employment of *placebos*. In cases such as often occur, in which nothing can be done, or in which nothing is needed, or in which I do not see at once what is required, and wish to have some time to consider what I should do, such *placebos* are the very best remedies that I can prescribe. It is even proper, for reasons already mentioned, that patients should sometimes be deceived by such remedies. They are not intended to deceive you, nor can they do it. But you must keep my secret, for the patient's benefit, as well as my credit.

“ It may be more necessary to make some apology for certain pieces of practice which I occasionally employ, that may appear to you rough at least, if not rash and dangerous. This I do sometimes, from a deliberate conviction that it is my duty to give my patients every chance for recovery or relief. Many of the cases which I treat in the clinical wards are almost or quite desperate ; especially if no very powerful means of cure be tried : yet even in cases seemingly desperate, I have sometimes been successful by the help of remedies so strong, that, if the patients had died, it might naturally have been thought, that I had killed them by the violence of the remedies which I prescribed. In all such cases, whatever be the event of them, as you know the principle on which I proceed, I shall without scruple trust to your candour and deliberate judgment. I surely need not caution you against a vulgar practice, in itself equally unreasonable and illiberal, of blaming a physician for every piece of practice that does not succeed ; and
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more especially for every prescription that seems to do, or that really does harm. The physician's prescription may not save the patient; it may hurt him; it may hasten his death, or may even be the immediate cause of it; while yet before trial it appeared, and perhaps was in fact, the best or only chance that the patient had for his life. *Conjecturalis est ars medica*, says Celsus; and so it ever must be, from the nature of the subject on which it operates. This is no reproach to physicians; but it is a very great one not to know, that such is the condition and the nature of medicine.

"Few physicians I believe can deny that they have lost some patients; and, for my own part, I certainly cannot deny that I have lost some, by the unexpected or violent effects of remedies: but I can say with confidence, that I know of very few such instances in my own practice, and of a great many of the very opposite kind; I mean of patients, whom I lost, who had at least a chance for recovery, by means of remedies which I was afraid to try. As I am no casuist, I presume not to determine whether, in such cases, the sins of commission, or those of omission, be the greatest: but I know well which are the most frequent, and the most pernicious."

It must not be thought, that the notion of clinical lectures, and of the practice of the Professors in the wards of this Hospital, which I have thus endeavoured to explain, is peculiar to myself: nothing else, I am sure, was ever intended by the Managers, when they permitted the Professors of Medicine to practise in this Infirmary, and to read lectures on the cases of their patients. Nor do I believe, that any person of competent information and judgment ever yet entertained a different notion of them. In proof of this,

I shall quote but a very few authorities, the most unexceptionable that can be conceived.

The first of these is the History of the Royal Infirmary, compiled by the late Dr Stedman, and published in 1778, but without the name of the author. After mentioning the permission given to all students of medicine, on paying a small gratuity, to attend the Hospital, that they might have all the benefit that could be derived from the practice of the physicians and surgeons, he proceeds, (page 16th) to give an account of the establishment of clinical lectures, in these words :

“ Farther, the Managers, considering that the defect of clinical lectures in medical seminaries had often proved a ground of complaint, gave liberty to the Professors of Medicine to lecture on such cases of the patients as they should find most conducive to the instruction of the students. This was the only branch wanting in the medical course ; and it may be considered as a practical illustration of what students have read by themselves, or heard in the different classes. The field, from which the Professor who hath the charge of this department selects his patients, being ample, a variety of curious and interesting cases may be supposed to present themselves in the space of six months. To hear, and, if students choose, to commit to writing, the histories of these, their daily change of symptoms, the various prescriptions, and a minute investigation of the whole in the subsequent lectures, seems to be all that can be done for initiating them in the practice of medicine.”

The next authority I shall quote is one much more recent, being exactly coeval with Mr John Bell's Answer to me, and one of those publications to which my former Memorial gave occasion. It is entitled, “ Outlines of a Plan for the Regulation of the Surgical Department of the Royal Infirmary, by John Thomson, Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh.” In this plan

plan he proposes, " That each ordinary Surgeon be allowed to give a clinical lecture, weekly or oftener; in which he shall explain to the students the nature of the cases admitted into his wards, and the reasons of his own practice; and that in the event of the ordinary surgeon declining the privilege of lecturing, it shall be permitted to one or other of the assistants to perform that duty."

Further, in explaining his plan, and stating the reasons for every part of it, he adds, " It is superfluous to insist on the advantages which the students of surgery would derive from the regular and stated delivery of clinical lectures; for this mode of teaching medicine and surgery by example is the surest and safest, if not the speediest method, that can be followed in forming able and skilful practitioners."

" But if clinical lectures be in an eminent degree useful to students, it is not less certain, that they would indirectly benefit the patients. If there be any thing which can induce the rash practitioner to pause, the inconsiderate to reflect, or the ill informed to seek for instruction, it is the necessity of explaining the grounds of his practice, and his opinions of disease, to an audience collected from the students of this University."

The only other authority on this point that I shall quote, is one also very recent, I believe rather subsequent to, than coeval with Mr John Bell's Answer to me. It is one which he and all his clients must admit to be unexceptionable and supreme; I mean the " Plan for the better Regulation of the Surgical Department of the Royal Infirmary, submitted to the consideration of the Managers of that Charitable Institution, by the Royal College of Surgeons;" that is to say, by that party, in number fifteen, of the Royal College of Surgeons, which at that time had got the upper hand by a majority of one; and to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, acted under the most auspicious guidance and immediate direction of Mr John Bell himself. Of

that plan, the eighth regulation is expressed in the following words. " That the Ordinary Surgeons shall have it in their power to give clinical lectures during their attendance, for three months each, or one of them for six months; and in case neither of them incline to do so, the consulting Surgeons in rotation, according to seniority, shall be entitled to deliver such lectures."

This regulation is explained and enforced by the following commentary. " The improvement of surgery is an object of the first importance to the community; and it appears to the College, that nothing leads more directly to such improvement than the delivering of clinical lectures: for it not only requires on the part of the surgeon the most minute attention to the case, but obliges him also to study the profession in all its branches, with assiduity and perseverance."

I presume it will hardly be maintained, even by the keenest of medical disputants, that the word clinical, and consequently the phrase clinical lectures, have one meaning (the same as empirical or experimental) on the first floor of this Infirmary, and a totally different meaning up two pair of stairs: nor yet will it be pretended, that experiments in surgery are less cruel or horrible than experiments in physic: But surely nothing contained in either of those proposals for clinical lectures on the patients in the surgery wards, implies any insinuation of trying experiments on them; or any one of those marvellous and horrible powers and privileges which Mr John Bell so highly bepraises the Managers for conferring on the Medical Professors who conduct the clinical lectures.

It is not enough to consider the general tenor of Mr John Bell's account of the clinical lectures, for many particular passages in it well deserve animadversion. Most of these are marked by numerical references on the margin, of which references I shall now avail myself in considering the several passages which they point out, and
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which I wish to be viewed always in their full relation to the context : but that I may not separate things naturally connected, I shall take them in the order which seems most convenient, not always in the order of the numbers on the margin.

Nº 1. *A Practical School.* A practical school is indeed an invaluable benefit, both in physic and surgery ; and, far from being any injury to the patients, must be greatly for their good, provided only it be of the proper kind, and well conducted. But there is a striking ambiguity in the phrase *practical school*, as here employed by Mr John Bell ; and, to the best of my judgment, there is a corresponding and studied obscurity in the use which he makes of that and similar expressions from end to end of his pamphlet. A *practical school* of physic or surgery may mean a great hospital which students are permitted to attend, and consequently to see and learn the practice of the physicians and surgeons who are selected by the managers to take care of the patients in their respective departments, and perhaps authorised or required to explain the reasons of their practice, and their notions of the diseases which they had treated, by reading clinical lectures on the cases which had come under their care.

But a practical school may also be understood to mean a great hospital, in which physicians and surgeons, especially the youngest and most inexperienced of these, are to be allowed to learn their respective arts, by practising on the patients admitted into it, and for this purpose, are allowed to attend, in very quick succession, on a system of indiscriminate rotation. That this was the meaning and intention of Deacon Kennedy and his friends, at the time when they made their odious bargain with the Managers of this Infirmary, is established beyond all possibility of doubt ; indeed it was avowed by themselves : and I cannot think it very uncharitable to suppose that something of the same meaning and intention may

may have been entertained by their worthy successors, even to the present hour, notwithstanding Mr John Bell's very strong assertions, that a surgeon cannot, like a physician, improve by experience, and *bona fide* has no need of it, as he ought to be perfect in operations before he presume to touch the knife. But that no injustice may be done to Mr John Bell and his clients on this very delicate point, I shall leave it to themselves to say who are to be the *scholars* and who the *teachers* in that practical school of surgery which they wish to have in this Infirmary. If the surgeons apprentices, and other students of physic, are to be the scholars, by seeing the practice and operations of the surgeons, I see no objections to such a school, which certainly must be at least as good for the scholars, probably much better, when a few Surgeons are selected for the Hospital-duty, than when all the Surgeons of this city attend indiscriminately by rotation. But if the scholars are themselves to be the practitioners and operators, *purely because they would be the better for more experience, which must be the case with all of them at first*, as Deacon Kennedy and his friends most sagaciously argued, such a school must ever be a horrible abomination. This point it is unnecessary to discuss again: my opinion on it has been stated fully already. I shall therefore, in proof of it, only quote two short paragraphs from my former Memorial, page 60. " To
 " those who are learning the arts of physic and surgery, the im-
 " provement that may be fairly derived from a well-conducted
 " hospital is great beyond all calculation. But this ought to con-
 " sist in their having opportunities of seeing and learning the prac-
 " tice of the most skilful, intelligent, and experienced physicians
 " and surgeons.

" Whatever is best for the patients, it is best for the students to
 " learn. Whatever is learned, or whatever real or supposed im-
 " provement is acquired at the expence of the poor patients, I
 " mean by any unnecessary suffering, or danger, or harm to them,

" is

“ is injustice and cruelty, instead of charity, benevolence, and brotherly love to the sufferers; it is a breach of trust in those who do it, or permit it; it is an outrage on human nature.”

It may be observed, that, in the long passage last quoted from the Answer to me, Mr John Bell labours hard to point out some resemblance between the system of indiscriminate attendance of the Surgeons by rotation, and the attendance of several of the Professors of Physic in rotation, with a view to give clinical lectures; and of course states the matter in such a way, as to give the preference strongly to the mode of attendance of the Surgeons. Whatever resemblance there may be between the two cases, there can be no difficulty in pointing out an infinite difference between them. In the first place, the number of Medical Professors in this University is but small. There are but six such Professorships; and sometimes two of these, that of Botany and Materia Medica, have been held by the same person. The Professors of Physic, whatever their merit or demerit may be, have at least been *selected*, by the patrons of the University, from among a great number of physicians, who would have been ambitious of that appointment. The patrons of the University have not even confined themselves to a choice among the great number of physicians settled in Edinburgh. They have occasionally given the appointment of Medical Professor in this University to Physicians who had acquired reputation as Professors in other universities.

Such was the case with Dr Cullen, Dr Black, and the present Dr Hope, who were well known, and highly esteemed, in the University of Glasgow; and with my Father, who had exerted himself to the utmost in teaching several branches of medicine in King's College Aberdeen, before they were appointed Professors in the University of Edinburgh. From such examples, and from the still more striking general fact of the high reputation which the medical school of Edinburgh acquired in less than half a century,

tury, it may fairly be presumed, that the patrons of it were equally honest and public spirited, in the choice which they made of the other Medical Professors; and that upon the whole, they have been tolerably successful in that matter; though no doubt Mr John Bell and his clients will think it right to make a great deduction from their credit in that respect, on account of their having twice bestowed the appointment of Professor on so ignorant and worthless a person as their very humble servant.

No body can suppose, that the patrons of the University shall always be directed by a kind of inspiration, to make choice of men of superior genius, as Professors of Physic, or of any other science in this University. Nor can any body suppose, that their appointment to a professorship is to confer talents on a man which nature had denied him. But, though I am, by their appointment, one of the Medical Professors myself, I must do them the justice to say, that they have had the sagacity to contrive, and the honesty to employ very faithfully, a simple but effectual expedient to prevent their Professors from being either ignorant or lazy. The expedient is indeed so admirable and infallible, and withal so cheap, that it ought to be generally known. It consists in giving us very small, or no salaries; so that our emoluments, which for a long time past have been very considerable, arise almost entirely from the number of our pupils; and this again from our own diligence in learning and teaching the several branches of science which we profess. I trust Mr John Bell and his clients will know where I got the two following lines; and, whatever they may think of the poetry, will at least acknowledge the truth of them.

*Qui docet indoctos, licet indoctissimus esset,
Ipse brevi reliquis doctior esse queat.*

A Professor of Physic in this University who does not seriously study and understand his own profession, must, in the first place, become an object of contempt to his colleagues and to the students; and, in the next place, he must starve; for the students will not attend his lectures, and the reason of this must be immediately and generally known.

On these principles, I should conceive, *a priori*, that there must be an infinite difference between the attendance of the whole six Medical Professors by rotation in the clinical wards, if this should ever happen, and the attendance of twenty, thirty, or forty Surgeons by rotation in the surgery wards, just to acquire a little experience and dexterity in their profession. But the well-known fact with respect to the attendance of the Medical Professors in the clinical wards, puts this point in a much clearer and stronger light. Far from being eager to attend there, each in his turn, for the sake of the improvement and experience which they might acquire by so doing, many of them could never be induced, either by the emoluments of that office, or their own acknowledged sense of duty, to take any share of the clinical lectures. Dr John Rutherford, the original Professor of the Practice of Physic in this University, had the merit of beginning the *Medical* clinical lectures, and had them all to himself for seven or eight years; but as soon as he found that some of his colleagues chose to undertake them, he withdrew from them: this was about fifty years ago. For some years afterwards, Dr Alexander Monro *primus*, Dr Whyte, and Dr Cullen, had the clinical lectures among them. From 1766 to 1773, all the time that my father was a Professor in this University, he and Dr Cullen had the winter clinical lectures between them; during which time, I believe, not more than one or two summer courses of clinical lectures were given, and these by Dr Francis Home only. Soon after my father's death, Dr Cullen's family prevailed on him to withdraw from the clinical lectures;

perceiving clearly, that the labour of them, in addition to his other academical and professional duties, was too much for him. Dr Plummer, Dr Alston, the present Dr Alexander Monro senior, Dr Black, and, what is still more remarkable, the late Dr John Hope, though he was a Physician to the Hospital, never would take any share of the clinical lectures. When I was appointed Professor of the Theory of Physic in 1776, not one of the four senior Professors, Dr Monro, Dr Cullen, Dr Hope, and Dr Black, would take any share of them : of course, they fell to the two junior Professors, Dr Francis Home and myself ; and on the same principle, we had them entirely between us two for fourteen years. I had the merit of prevailing on the present Dr Daniel Rutherford to take a share of the clinical lectures ; but that I found no easy matter to accomplish ; nor indeed did I get it accomplished, till he was appointed one of the ordinary Physicians of the Infirmary, which I think was not till about four years after he had been appointed Professor of Physic and Botany : and I believe I have had at least as much merit, and as much difficulty, in prevailing on Dr Rutherford to continue to take his share of the clinical lectures ; nor do I believe that I should have succeeded in that object, and I certainly should not have continued to take a share of them myself, if the labour had not been made lighter, or at least less frequent in its return, by our junior colleagues, Dr Duncan, Dr Hope, and Dr James Home, sharing it with us. Though I have bestowed much good advice upon him for that purpose, I have not yet prevailed on Dr Alexander Monro junior to take any share of the clinical lectures. The plain truth is, that they are so severe a labour, both in point of attention and time, that all of us feel them very irksome, even though our time of attendance is but three months ; and as clinical lectures cannot be prepared beforehand, as those on every other branch of physic may be, and ought to be, the incessant drudgery of preparing them from day to day, and the consequent interruption of all other

other study, and much other business, even for so short a time as three months, is often very inconvenient, and sometimes quite intolerable.

N^o 2. " For the performing of these duties, clinical wards are appointed: this is the department of *your Hospital which we now proceed to explain.*" This is wonderfully obliging in Mr John Bell; the more so, as it seems to be a very unnecessary piece of trouble that he has taken. He has not mentioned *to whom* he means to *explain* it; but from his expression of *your Hospital*, it should seem that the explanation was intended for the benefit of the Managers: yet surely they could have no need of any such explanation, any more than of being told their own Christian and surnames, their stations or professions, or their places of abode. Whatever the clinical lectures are, or were intended to be, must have been perfectly known to the Managers from first to last: and unless the Managers had known and intended such things, they could not have been entitled, either seriously or ironically, to those extravagant praises which Mr John Bell has lavished upon them, for permitting such lectures on the cases of the patients in the Hospital of which they had the care.

The Clinical Professors, and their students, could have as little occasion for any such explanation; for they must have known perfectly every thing relating to the clinical lectures.

Moreover, the Managers, the Clinical Professors, and the Students, must all have known perfectly many things relating to the clinical lectures, which are absolutely inconsistent with the account or explanation that Mr John Bell has given of them.

Some of these things I shall beg leave to state, from the most authentic documents, for the satisfaction of the curious, and of the public; for whose edification Mr John Bell's account of them seems plainly to have been intended.

The beginning and progress of the clinical lectures has been briefly as follows.

February 1. 1748. The Preses of the meeting of the Managers (Dr John Clerk) informed them, that Dr Rutherford had intended to begin a course of clinical lectures to his own students, and that he designed to have applied to the Managers for the use of the operation-room in the Infirmary to give these lectures in, and to have begun them this winter; but that as he was determined to admit no student to attend them who had not a ticket for the Infirmary, lest that might hurt the funds of the Hospital, and as he found, on enquiry, that some of the students who wished to attend his clinical lectures had not such tickets, he chose to postpone giving those lectures till next winter, to publish his advertisement of them in October, and to make it a condition, that all who were to attend them should have Infirmary-tickets. But the Managers, as soon as they were informed of these things, considering, that the year of attendance, by virtue of an Infirmary-ticket, (which at that time began at Michaelmas), was far advanced, and thinking it unreasonable to desire the students to take tickets at that time, and judging that those lectures might be of very great service to the students, and also of advantage to the Hospital, very handsomely and liberally recommended to Dr Rutherford to begin his clinical lectures immediately, agreed to give him the use of a room in the Infirmary for that purpose, and gave orders that all his students should be admitted. This, I believe, was the only time that students were allowed to attend the clinical lectures who had not Infirmary-tickets.

The next mention of the clinical lectures that I can find in the minute-book of the Managers is of date 23d January 1749, and is part of the statutes of the Royal Infirmary, which, after much consideration, were at that time finally adopted and permanently established. It is in these words: " The Professors of Medicine in
" the

“ the Univerſity may, *during their attendance*, give clinical lectures
 “ to the licenſed ſtudents on the caſes of the patients of this Infir-
 “ mary, at any hour, excepting the ordinary hour of viſiting, and
 “ may have the peruſal of the ledger of the patients.”

The next mention that I find of the clinical lectures in the minutes of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, is of date 1ſt January 1750, and is in the following words. “ The Managers alſo
 “ conſidering that the money received laſt year from ſtudents for
 “ tickets was L. 76, 12 s. Sterling more than what was received
 “ in the year 1748, which probably was in a good meaſure owing
 “ to the clinical lectures given by Dr Rutherford laſt year; they
 “ likewiſe authoriſe and appoint the treaſurer to cauſe fit up im-
 “ mediately a ward to accommodate patients proper for Dr Ruther-
 “ ford to give his clinical lectures upon, which he may take in as
 “ he wants them, theſe patients not exceeding ten in number,
 “ during the three months in which he gives theſe lectures, the
 “ expence of maintenance of which patients, the Managers hope,
 “ will be much more than made up to the houſe by the additional
 “ number of tickets which will be taken out merely on account of
 “ theſe lectures.”

It is worth while here to remark, that the additional ſum of L. 76, 12 s. received from ſtudents the firſt year that clinical lectures were given in the Hoſpital beyond what had been received the year before, ſmall as it may appear to us in itſelf, was by no means ſmall in compariſon of the whole money received for Infirmary-tickets; the whole amount of which for the year 1749 was but L. 172, 4 s.; the year before it had been but about L. 96: ſo that this branch of the revenue of the Hoſpital was at that time, and ſeemingly in conſequence of thoſe lectures, nearly doubled.

7th January 1751, the number of clinical patients was increaſed to fifteen.

6th January 1752, the number of them was increased to twenty, which has ever since been considered as the regular number of the establishment; but with a kind of *bona fide* latitude, well understood both by the Professors and the Managers, that the average number of the patients for the whole time that the clinical wards are open shall not exceed that establishment. But as it often happens, that for many weeks together the clinical wards are not half filled, so, on the other hand, they are occasionally completely filled, in which state they contain, without crowding, nine-and-twenty patients. On some extraordinary emergencies they have even been crowded, so as to contain two or three and thirty patients; but this, for many obvious reasons, is never done without necessity, and never is long continued.

With respect to the privileges given to the Medical Professors, for the purpose of giving clinical lectures, all that I find mentioned in the Managers minutes, and all I ever heard of or understood to be enjoyed by them, in addition to what is already quoted in the preceding page, is what follows.

“ January 7th 1751, it was enacted and declared, That the Clinical Lectures to be given by the Professors of Medicine, which, by the statute as it is expressed, seem to be confined to the time of their attendance in course, should be so extended as to be given at any time they should find most beneficial to the Students, without the limitation aforesaid.”

This related to the system which at that time prevailed, but which was soon afterwards abolished, of all the Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, including of course the Medical Professors, attending by rotation in the Infirmary.

Though, by these regulations of the Managers, all the Professors of Physic were permitted to give clinical lectures, it does not appear that any of them, except Dr Rutherford, chose to avail themselves of that privilege till winter 1756-7. “ On the 27th
“ November

“ November 1756, Dr Alexander Monro *primus*, Dr Cullen, and
 “ Dr White addressed a letter to the Managers, offering to assist in
 “ the Clinical Lectures, if the Managers thought it could be of use
 “ to the Infirmary, and should think proper to give the necessary
 “ orders for that purpose.” That winter accordingly the clinical
 lectures were given by four Professors, in the following order :
 Dr Monro, Dr White, Dr Rutherford, and Dr Cullen : and that, I
 believe, was the last time that Dr Rutherford took any share in
 them.

As I should be very sorry to be suspected of suppressing the
 smallest particle of any privilege granted by the Managers to any
 one of the Clinical Professors, I must mention a particular privi-
 lege that was granted to one of them individually and personally,
 namely Dr Rutherford, at their meeting 5th February 1750.
 “ The Managers authorised Dr Rutherford to open the dead bodies
 “ of any of his clinical patients who should happen to die under
 “ cure, as he should think proper, without the necessity of applying
 “ to the Managers for a warrant for that purpose, as is required
 “ by the statutes in the cases of other patients who happen to die.”
 But, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this privilege was
 never granted to any other Clinical Professor ; and I am certain at
 least, that in the time of Dr Cullen and my father, as well as
 during my own long incumbency, we have been obliged, on such
 occasions, just like the ordinary Physicians, to apply for the regu-
 lar permission signed by two of the Managers.

After carefully examining the minutes of the Managers from the
 time when the clinical lectures were first mentioned in 1748, to
 the end of the year 1760, full four years after they were put on
 that footing on which they have ever since continued, I can find no
 vestige of any other permissions, powers, or privileges granted by
 the Managers to the Professors of Physic in conducting their prac-
 tice in the Hospital and their clinical lectures ; nothing like those
 marvellous

marvellous and horrible powers which Mr John Bell says the Managers granted to the Professors of Physic; and no appearance of the Managers ever having supposed that their own *delegated powers extended omnipotently over the lives of their fellow-creatures.*

Nº 8. “ *As for experiments in surgery, we know of none,*” &c. If so, and if *clinical* has that meaning which Mr John Bell has been pleased to give it, then clinical lectures on surgery, which Mr John Bell, and his friends, and clients, and professional brethren, have strongly, and, what is more wonderful, but certainly true, *unanimously* recommended, as not only useful, but highly important, which Mr Russell has for many years been accustomed to give with great approbation, and for the giving of which he has lately been appointed a Regius Professor, *must* be not only useless, but *impossible*. On the other hand, if *clinical* does not mean experimental in surgery, it is difficult to understand how it can have that horrible meaning in physic. Such difficulties Mr John Bell and his clients may consider and solve at their leisure. In the mean time, I beg leave to say, that, to my certain knowledge, every piece of practice, both in physic and surgery, is an *experiment*; nay, a precarious experiment. We have no absolute certainty of the result being just what we wish: in some cases the chance of success is very great, perhaps a hundred or a thousand to one, in favour of our patient: in other cases it is very small, perhaps ten, twenty, or forty to one against our patient. In some cases, even in physic, the experiment is attended with danger: and in many cases in surgery the danger of the practice or experiment, as in all those operations which are called *capital*, is incomparably greater than it is in the practice of physic. But be the danger greater or less, it is the duty of the Physician or Surgeon to give his patient his best or only chance for recovery or relief. In numberless cases the disease requiring such practice or operation, if left to
itself,

itself, would soon prove fatal; and in many others would continue, and probably increase for months or years, and at last prove fatal; but in the mean time, would keep the patient in torture, deprived of every enjoyment, and unfitted for every duty in life.

But perhaps Mr John Bell and his clients may choose to say, that by experiments they meant only new experiments; that is, the first trials of new modes of practice, new medicines, new preparations of old medicines, the first performing of newly proposed operations, or of old operations in a new manner; and that therefore, by their assertion, that they knew of no experiments in their profession, they meant only, that no new experiments, new operations, or improvements of old operations, or new practices of any kind, were ever to be attempted in surgery. Even in this limited and improper sense of the term experiment, it may easily be shown, that their assertion, of there being no experiments in surgery, is not only grossly erroneous, but almost absurd; at least so repugnant both to reason and to well known matter of fact, that it is *impossible* they should have believed it. It is self-evident, that every operation in surgery, and every peculiar mode of performing it, and indeed every piece of practice, either in surgery or physic, even those that are now the most familiar, the most generally practised, the safest, the most salutary, and in every respect the best, were at one time perfectly new experiments. Unless such experiments had been made, there never could have been either physic or surgery. After any number of the practices so introduced had become well established, and so familiar as not to be called or thought experiments, it is equally self-evident, that unless further new experiments had been tried, there could have been no improvements either in physic or in surgery. I do not believe that any individual of common sense, however small his knowledge of physic or surgery may be, can seriously wish that such new experiments had been prevented at any time, either by legal prohibi-

tion, or by the sentiments and manners of different nations ; and therefore I distrust what we are told of the laws and customs of the ancient Egyptians in this respect. It is said, that by their laws their physicians were obliged to follow exactly the rules of practice laid down in their system of physic, which it was pretended they derived from Hermes. If a physician followed these rules, he was regarded as blameless though his patient died ; but if in his practice he deviated from them, and his patient died, he was put to death. I doubt whether the ingenuity of man could have contrived a more effectual bar to every attempt at improvement. Supposing, in compliment to Diodorus Siculus, whose authority I take to be none of the best, that the Egyptians had really adopted that most absurd institution, it is evidently impossible to wish that any other nation should, at any period of its history, have done the same. We know pretty well what the state of physic and surgery was in the time of Hippocrates, about two thousand two hundred years ago : yet surely, with all due deference to the venerable father of physic, it may be said, that by far the greater number of the most powerful medicines, the best operations, and the best practices of every kind, have been introduced, that is, have been new experiments, since his time. The same considerations are equally applicable and decisive with respect to the state of physic and surgery, every century, every year, every day, since the time of Hippocrates. In the course of the last century, in the latter half of it, in the last quarter of it, many great improvements have been introduced, both in physic and surgery ; and unless physicians and surgeons become miraculously stupid and lazy, many improvements, both in physic and surgery, will be proposed in the course of the present century, perhaps in the course of this year. The assertion, therefore, that there are no experiments in surgery, must imply, either that surgery is incapable of improvement, or that no improvements in it are to be permitted. And if Mr John Bell and
his

his clients believed what he asserted and they sanctioned, they must also have believed one or other of those absurdities : worse and worse, of all the improvements in surgery which the said Mr John Bell is to contrive and propose, and with all his eloquence to recommend to his brethren and to the public, great and numerous as they must be, not one can ever be adopted, or even tried : and worst of all, that most despicable and detestable work, which has the impudence to call itself “ A System of Surgery, by Benjamin “ Bell,” in six squat, fat, vulgar-looking octavo volumes, the very sight of any one of which is enough to make a man sick, must remain the standard-book in surgery, not for forty or fifty years only, which probably is all that the author himself, or any of his best friends, ever expected or thought possible, but to all eternity. Can Mr John Bell, or any of his friends, wish for this ? or think of it without horror ? or fail to see, that the only possible way to prevent that most dreadful of all calamities to surgery and to mankind, is to try new experiments in surgery, and to introduce new practices, no matter whether better or worse than his, provided only they be different from those which the said Benjamin recommends, and many hundreds or thousands of surgeons at this time employ.

These self-evident truths with respect to the absolute necessity of new experiments in all ages, past, present, and future, first for the beginning, and afterwards for the improvement of surgery as well as of physic, Mr John Bell and his clients may have disregarded ; but this can have proceeded only from their never having attended to the subject : for if they will think of it but for one minute, I am convinced (notwithstanding their most *liberal* and *candid* declaration, that “ they *unequivocally approve*, in the practice of the medical profession, a *latitude* which they *dare not admit “ in their own*”) that not one of them, individually or collectively, will choose to dispute any of those propositions.

As to the truly experimental nature of all the oldest and commonest practices, either in physic or surgery, the uncertainty of the event, and even the danger of many of them ; all these things are so generally known, and so well understood, and in most cases so justly weighed by patients before they submit to any capital operation in surgery, or even to some pieces of medical practice, that I could not *à priori* have suspected that Mr John Bell, or any one of his clients, could be ignorant of them ; and accordingly read with some astonishment, what he has asserted so roundly, and his clients have sanctioned as usual, in the paragraph at present under review, (No. 9.) “ When a white swelling is plainly incurable, it “ is no experiment to cut off the limb, and there is but one way in “ which the operation can be performed !”

Merely cutting off a leg can hardly be called an experiment ; for it is a matter of almost mechanical certainty, just like sawing off the leg of a table or the bough of a tree, at least I never heard of any patient who was a candidate for amputation, and fairly under the hands of a surgeon for that purpose, being disappointed, with respect to getting rid of his leg or arm ; as many thousands have been whose ambition extended only to blood-letting or tooth-drawing. It is just after the leg is cut off that the *experiment begins*. The purpose of amputation, as of every other operation in surgery, and of almost every piece of surgical practice, I mean especially all kinds of local applications or dressings, is to remove an impediment to the process of nature in performing a cure. This is one of the most general and important differences between the practice of physic and that of surgery : the greater part of the physician's practice consists in exciting, promoting, restraining, and sometimes imitating by art, various operations of nature in the human body ; many of which certainly have, and all of which have been supposed to have a salutary tendency ; but in many cases are almost or altogether a-wanting ; in other cases are too feeble and insufficient ; and
in

in many cases are too violent, so as to be attended with great and immediate danger. Every body knows, that neither physic nor surgery can do any good to a dead body; and most people will believe without much difficulty, that in a living body, from the failure of the powers of life, approaching very near to the state of a dead one, both physic and surgery would be equally unavailing. It is no less certain, though not quite so obvious, that in numberless cases the powers of nature alone, with no assistance, or worse than none, from our art, accomplish the cure; while the Doctor, like Belinda's Betty, "is praised for labours not his own." The same powers, whose operations may sometimes be a-wanting, or too feeble, at other times too violent, irregular, or wrong directed, are just as necessary for the success of any surgical operation, as for that of any piece of medical practice. Not only an amputation, but the smallest incision that ever a surgeon makes, would be an incurable, and soon a mortal wound, were it not for the healing process of nature. I know of no cure, either in physic or surgery, for the scratch of a pin; and as to such a capital operation as cutting off a limb, I thought every surgeon had known that it was an experiment which necessarily implied many and great dangers. The patient may faint and die during the operation, or immediately after it, from loss of blood, and partly perhaps even from pain; in a few hours after, the blood may burst again from the vessels, in such quantity, that the patient shall die before any assistance can be procured, or in spite of the immediate assistance of the most skilful surgeon. The precautions usually taken to prevent these dangers, show abundantly that they are real and well known. Supposing all danger from loss of blood to be prevented; violent or bad inflammation, followed by gangrene, may come upon the stump, and be fatal to the patient in less than a week; as in the case quoted from Mr John Bell's own book, I mean his *Principles of Surgery*, vol. i. page 369, (page 275th of this

this Memorial): a locked jaw may take place in a few days, or a few weeks, and probably be fatal in three or four days: according to his own account of the horrid state of the surgeons wards in this Hospital, twice every year, perhaps for many weeks each time, a patient, after such an operation, would probably, or at some seasons certainly, be attacked with hospital-gangrene, and have but a small chance of escaping with his life. Supposing the patient to escape all these dangers, he yet may not recover; tedious and bad suppuration may take place, attended with hectic fever, which, after wasting him miserably for several months, would at last prove fatal.

As to Mr John Bell's assertion, that *there is but one way in which the operation* (cutting off a limb) *can be performed*, it is altogether marvellous and incomprehensible. Things must be come to a sad pass indeed with him, if he can quietly submit to the disgrace of cutting off a leg in the same bungling butcher-like manner that his dear namesake Benjamin Bell, or Mr Russell, or Mr Wardrope, &c. &c. would do. He is not the man of genius that I take him for, if he would not rather snip off the leg with a pair of crooked scissors, or bite it off with his teeth, than submit to the indignity of doing as they do, or offering such violence to his conscience, as to say that they did, or ever could do right. But there is no danger of his ever being reduced to such a dire dilemma. I know three or four ways of cutting off a limb: and I dare say Mr John Bell knows, or at the worst could easily contrive, as many more; and prove any one of them to be infinitely better than the best of those at present in use. But he need not even take that trouble. Within my memory a new mode of cutting off legs was introduced, (or an old one revived, I am uncertain which), and strongly recommended by an eminent surgeon, Mr Alanfon. It was called the Flap operation, or cutting with Flaps. I remember to have heard some disputes about it: for as there were

Flappers,

Flappers, of course there must have been Anti-flappers: and as the dispute began little more than twenty years ago, far from being ended as yet, it can scarce be arrived at full maturity and violence. Mr Benjamin Bell must be either a Flapper or an Anti-flapper: and I humbly conjecture, (for I do not know the fact), that if he is a Flapper, Mr John Bell will be a determined Anti-flapper; but that if Benjamin is an Anti-flapper, John will be a most strenuous Flapper. But flap or no flap, he certainly may take his choice of several ways of cutting off a leg.

Nº 10. *But it is an experiment, and a bold one too, when arsenic is given to cure that slight intermitting fever which bark and wine will positively cure.*

From the latter part of this sentence I infer, that the intermitting fevers which Mr John Bell has met with in his practice, just like bachelors wives and maids children, have been always very tractable. But I presume any physician who has had but a few years experience, can testify, that intermitting fevers, though in this country they are generally slight, and easily cured by bark and wine, or very often by bark without wine, are not always very easily cured by those remedies, or by any others that I am acquainted with. So slight a circumstance as an east wind, which is no scarce commodity in this country at one season of the year, will sometimes baffle a physician, with all his bark and wine, for several weeks; nay, after his patients have been cured, as he supposed, positively and easily, the said east wind will sometimes bring them back their intermittent fevers, more severe and more obstinate than before. Even without any east wind, various morbid conditions of the body itself will sometimes frustrate the good effects of the bark, and perhaps render the administration of it difficult, if not quite impossible. Sometimes, but rarely I believe in this country, wine is found absolutely pernicious; and various

various evacuations, especially blood-letting, and low diet, are salutary, and even necessary, in such fevers.

I can guess why Mr John Bell should mention the administration of *arsenic* in the passage under review; as it is well calculated to excite indignation and horror in the ignorant and vulgar, and cannot fail to be a noble subject for declamation to the malevolent, who probably never heard of arsenic but as a substance often employed with great success to poison rats, and sometimes to poison Christians. But that Mr John Bell, or any of his clients, should really think the administration of arsenic, as a cure for intermittent fevers, a *bold experiment*, appears to me quite incredible. None of them surely can be ignorant, that for many years, arsenic has, in many places, even of England, been very generally used with safety and success for the cure of such fevers. They surely must have known, that there was good reason to believe, that certain secret or quack medicines, especially the tasteless ague-drop, which were found remarkably successful in curing agues, and were in general use among the lower orders in some parts of England, owed their virtue to a small portion of arsenic which they contained. They surely must have known, that about seventeen years ago an eminent physician, Dr Fowler of Stafford, published an account of his administration of arsenic in such fevers, and of the great and uniform success of it, when the medicine was given with due caution, and in proper, that is, very small doses. They surely know, that it has been employed since that time, openly and avowedly, by many practitioners, with equal success. They surely know, that the proper doses of arsenic, which may be given with perfect safety, and with almost the certainty of success, in intermittent fevers, are just as well ascertained as the proper doses of opium, foxglove, mercury, antimony, or any other of our commonest and most powerful medicines. It would therefore be foolish, as well as unnecessary, to tell them, but
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for the edification of others, who must be interested in this matter, and are not in the secret, I think it right to mention the general facts or principles with respect to the administration of arsenic. It is perfectly ascertained, that the twentieth part of a grain of it, taken twice or thrice a-day, is too small a dose to cure an intermittent fever, or even to produce any sensible effects on a grown person of ordinary strength; and that the eighth part of a grain, taken twice or thrice a-day, is too strong a dose for such a person, as it generally produces some disorder in the stomach or bowels. Of course, the dose for a grown person is within those limits; generally from the tenth to the sixteenth part of a grain, twice or thrice a-day. Those very minute quantities of the medicine are easily obtained, not by weighing out and subdividing a single grain of it, but in the same manner that minute quantities of other active medicines are usually ascertained, by dissolving a small but definite quantity of the medicine, in a large quantity of water, or some other liquid, the proportion of which to the arsenic dissolved in it is precisely known. The solution recommended by Dr Fowler, and most commonly employed, is of the strength of sixty-four grains (somewhat more than half a quarter of an ounce) to an English pint of liquid: that solution is given by drops, like the tincture of opium, and many other active medicines: eight drops contain the twentieth, twenty drops the eighth part of a grain of arsenic: and the common dose of it is from ten to sixteen drops for a grown person, and four or five for a young child. By such doses, some thousands of patients every year are cured of intermitting fevers, without difficulty, or danger, or inconvenience, or bad consequences of any kind; and, what to many of them is of much importance, without expence. The Peruvian bark is so costly a medicine, and the quantities of it required for curing intermitting fevers are often so great, amounting to many ounces, especially if the patients cannot remove from

the unhealthy marshy situations where they caught their fevers, that they cannot afford to be cured by it. Moreover, many patients, especially children, cannot or will not take, or, if they do take, cannot retain the Peruvian bark: but the arsenic, in proper doses, any person may take without disgust, nay, without knowing it. I therefore think it highly probable, that the arsenic will soon supersede the use of the Peruvian bark as a cure for intermittent fevers, and very possibly may soon after be itself superseded by some other medicine of equal or greater efficacy; and less danger, if by any accident too much of it should be taken. But in the mean time, with the cautions already mentioned, and perhaps some others, such as the addition of certain substances, which are conceived, whether rightly or not I am uncertain, to correct its bad, or improve its good qualities, it must be regarded as on the same footing with antimony, opium, and many other powerful medicines. No body is afraid to give or to take opium as a medicine, though a very small quantity of it would certainly be fatal. Not having as yet found a safe place to try such dangerous experiments, I cannot tell exactly how few grains of it might kill a grown person, or how small a part of a grain of it might kill a very young child: but I shrewdly suspect, that much less than is commonly supposed might effectually do the business, either of the man or the child. Yet we apprehend no danger from giving one or two grains of it to a man, or the tenth or twentieth part of a grain of it to a child; and we find no difficulty in measuring those small doses with sufficient accuracy, by giving the infant one or two small drops, and the adult thirty or forty drops, of the common tincture of opium.

As to antimony, it is well known that a very small quantity of some of the preparations of it will produce the most violent effects on the stomach and bowels, effects not very different from those of arsenic; and that many people have been poisoned by it. It has
been

been said, (but, like all other important and some frivolous points in physic, this has been much disputed), that the very name by which it has been known for some centuries past, was given to it in consequence of a parcel of lazy monks having been poisoned by it, which their friends and acquaintance thought a good joke, and therefore called the medicine *Antimonium*, wishing by this term to denote something like Monks-bane. But it is certain at least, that about 250 years ago it was formally prohibited and condemned as an arrant poison, not only by our most noble Faculty, but by the Parliament of Paris. Yet this very active and almost poisonous drug, when properly prepared, and administered in very small doses, is a useful medicine, and has even become such a favourite with many people, that they insist upon taking and giving some of the preparations of it, especially James's powder, on very slight occasions, such as a common cold; and often, as I think, from mere idleness, or because they have nothing else to do.

Not only those medicines, which, as they produce violent and sometimes fatal effects, though given but in very small quantity, may naturally be regarded as poisons, but some medicines against which no such objections can be urged, have often been the objects of great terror and strong prejudices, both among physicians and their patients, and have sometimes been made the subjects of the most virulent and malevolent declamation: for example, the Peruvian bark itself, against which, even in the cure of intermittent fevers, prejudices were long entertained, as strong and as inveterate as any that Mr John Bell, or the keenest of his clients, can entertain or profess against arsenic in the cure of the same diseases. Such prejudices against the bark, when judiciously employed, are now regarded with general and well-merited contempt: and so, no doubt, will the prejudices against the use of arsenic be, when it is not left to the rash, indiscriminate, and per-

haps knavish administration of quacks, but given openly, and with all necessary cautions, by regular practitioners.

The best proof and illustration that I can give, or indeed conceive, of this point, and one which, in justice to Mr John Bell, I think myself bound to mention, is, that the short period of two years has produced a great change in the sentiments of the said John Bell with respect to all the three points in question. In that time he has learned to think more reverently of intermittent fevers, to be less confident in the powers of the Peruvian bark, as positively (by which I presume he meant certainly and universally) curing them, and has even learned to be less afraid of giving arsenic for that purpose. I cannot help thinking it a curious and instructive circumstance, that he should be the only person that ever yet proposed to me to administer arsenic to a patient. This patient laboured under an obstinate intermittent fever, which had baffled all my skill, and resisted the powers of the bark and other remedies for some time, and had been equally uncivil to Mr John Bell, and the bark which he prescribed, for a much longer time before I was called in. I presume he will remember the case to which I allude, as it occurred so lately as the beginning of December last, and as there were in it the following very striking particulars. The patient (whom for the present I shall call Dr H. M. L.) was a physician; he had suffered severely by an intermittent fever in the East Indies, which had resisted the Peruvian bark there, and had been cured by arsenic. The patient himself wished arsenic to be tried again, and suggested this to Mr John Bell, who proposed it to me. I agreed to it most cheerfully, and prescribed the arsenical solution accordingly, though the patient actually laboured under another disease, which many physicians would have thought, but which I did not think, sufficient to forbid the use of the arsenic. He was cured by it perfectly, and without any sensible inconvenience, in four or five days, between the 7th and the 12th of December

ber 1802: he has felt no inconvenience or bad effects from it since; and so lately as the 24th of March 1803, I had the pleasure of seeing him in at least as good health as he enjoyed before that last attack of the intermittent fever, and that last use of the arsenic. I should think it impossible to contrive a case better adapted to convince Mr John Bell, and all his clients, that the use of arsenic in some intermittent fevers, is neither a bold nor an unnecessary experiment; and to satisfy the public, that when physicians do occasionally employ such a medicine as arsenic in a clinical or a common ward of an hospital, it is no more, and no worse, than what they do, in private practice, to their best friends, or to themselves, when the circumstances of their diseases seem to require it.

N^o 14. *A distinct clinical hospital is a thing quite unknown, such an undertaking never was attempted, &c.* In the proper sense of the word clinical, as already explained, (page 379.), every charitable institution for the relief and cure of the sick poor, in which they are entertained and provided with beds, is a clinical hospital: a charitable institution for the relief of the sick poor which is not clinical, is called not an hospital, but a dispensary.

In the sense of the word clinical in which it is used and explained by Mr John Bell, (16, 17.), *erected with the avowed design of receiving desperate and forlorn cases! of practising experiments! of teaching the profession to young physicians! of proving the hypotheses of medicine! and trying by experience the efficacy of drugs*—a clinical hospital is indeed a thing quite unknown, and I trust shall ever continue so.

But an hospital erected with the avowed and sole design of receiving *desperate and forlorn cases*, that is, in plain English, an hospital of *incurables*, would be a most charitable and useful institution.

Such an hospital, to my certain knowledge, is much wanted in Edinburgh; and I presume, without any minute enquiry, that it must

must be equally wanted in all great towns. I think it highly probable, that in process of time such an institution will be established here; and I mention with much pleasure, in hopes that it may promote such a plan, the benevolent and judicious bequest of a respectable old lady, Mrs MURRAY KEITH, lately deceased; who, anxious that her charities might not die with herself, by a letter addressed to me, bequeathed two thousand pounds, for alleviating the distress of some of the most wretched of mankind, who being found incurable, (or, as she expressed it, “ after getting their sentence), are turned out of the Hospital to starve, and for whom “ there never has been any sort of provision, though surely they “ are the most miserable of objects. Often has she reflected on “ this subject with grief, long before she herself was amongst “ the number of incurables.” This unhappily was her fate, by the most painful and incurable lameness, during the last fifteen years of her life. *Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco*, evidently was the sentiment which produced that benevolent bequest. Considering, very rightly, that any sum which she had to bequeath was too small to build and endow a separate hospital, she directed the interest of the two thousand pounds which she bequeathed “ to be bestowed on the poorest and most helpless; but wishing, “ where other claims were equal, the preference to be given to the “ lame, who, by being confined within doors, are deprived of “ free air and exercise, which, by raising the spirits, enable many “ others, though as incurable, to bear their sad fate with some “ degree of resolution,” she directed particularly, that none of the objects of her bounty “ should get above ten pounds yearly, “ and not even so much, if not well recommended, and each person to be informed, that the continuance of their allowance depended entirely on their good behaviour, and be warned against “ vice in general, but particularly against drinking, now become “ so common amongst both men and women, that few are entirely “ free

“ free from it ;” for which reason she directed they should be paid their allowance quarterly. She added, “ It has just now occurred to her, that if any poor Negroes should chance to be amongst the incurables, not to let their colour be any objection, but rather cast the balance in their favour, as they are friends, and without connections in this country, consequently in greater danger of starving than our own people.”

This bequest, which was made about midsummer 1802, and became known by the death of Mrs Murray Keith in November last, is not the only one of the kind. Still more lately, another benevolent person, the late LADY RACHEL BRUCE, has bequeathed two hundred pounds for the same charitable purpose. I hope and trust these good examples shall be followed by many others. But if this were done to such an extent as to permit the building and endowing of a large hospital for the reception of such desperate and forlorn cases, such an hospital, for very obvious reasons, ought to be separate and distinct from this Infirmary : but whether distinct from it or connected with it, for example, by the Managers, in *direct violation* of the original plan, and of the charter of this Hospital, allotting certain wards of it for the reception of those most miserable objects, I am sure that such an hospital, or such wards, would be most absurdly unfit for the purpose of the Medical Professors, and their clinical lectures.

For the honour of human nature in general, and of my own profession in particular, I must believe that physicians will easily be found willing to give their professional assistance for the relief of those helpless and miserable objects whom they can have no hopes of curing. But I do not believe that the Medical Professors in this University, or any one of them, would ever be induced, either by motives of humanity or zeal for science, to take the charge of those wards for the sake “ of practising experiments, of teaching the profession to young physicians, of proving the hypotheses of
“ medicine,

“ medicine, of teaching not only the genuine practice, but the various theories of medicine, and trying by experience the efficacy of drugs.” I should just as soon believe that a set of professors and physicians should be found, who would deliberately go away and hang themselves, for the advancement of science, and the good of mankind. At any rate, in either case, of such clinical lectures, and such hanging, I should decline being of the party.

A moment's reflection must convince any person of the truth of what I have here stated, and the *impossibility* of the clinical lectures ever being what Mr John Bell and his clients have thought fit to represent them. Supposing, for the sake of argument, that all of us who have ever engaged in clinical lectures, are as unprincipled, unfeeling, atrocious villains, as he and his friends wish to make us be thought, it cannot surely be supposed that we are also perfect idiots: it must rather be believed, in pure Christian charity, that, like other physicians, we are true to our profit and our pride; both of which must be sacrificed *for ever*, if we undertook the charge of such patients and such lectures. Every physician, however unfeeling or unprincipled he may be, must, even for his own sake, wish to be successful in his practice; for of all things this must tend most to procure him wealth and honour: and of all Physicians, those who read clinical lectures on the cases of their patients must be presumed the most desirous of being successful; for, in addition to all other considerations of duty, honour, and interest, they have the very cogent reason of being obliged to give a minute account of all that they have done, of the reasons of their practice, and the causes of its bad success, when it proves unsuccessful; every particular of which must be publicly known. The character of any Physicians who should undertake the charge of such clinical wards, and practise in them in the way that Mr John Bell has described, must soon be established in a manner fatal to all their hopes of success in their profession; they, as well as their wards, would
soon

soon be objects of horror to the rich, as well as the poor : not only every patient admitted into their wards, but every patient who came under their care, would *think himself every way lost, and those who died would be thought to have suffered.*

In that sense of the word *clinical*, in which it has generally been used in this medical school, and I believe wherever our institutions have been imitated, I mean as relating to practical lectures given by the Professors on the cases of the patients, a *clinical hospital* must always be a very rare institution, for the plainest and best reasons in the world. Such an hospital can very seldom be needed, because a few small wards in any common hospital must always be amply sufficient for all the purposes of clinical lectures ; and it is only in Universities in which there are great medical schools, or in great towns in which there are many young men breeding to physic and surgery, that such lectures probably will be given. But I do not believe that, in this sense of the word, a clinical hospital is a thing quite unknown ; for, to the best of my information, such a one was established at Goettingen, originally and chiefly with a view to clinical lectures. But if every hospital in the world were made clinical, in that sense, the patients in it, for reasons fully explained already, (page 379. 84.), might be much the better, and could not be the worse, for such an innovation.

From what I have said, it must be fully understood, that I do not mean that experiments, of the proper kind, are not to be tried in clinical wards, or clinical hospitals ; but only that no other experiments are permitted to be tried in them, than ought to be tried in other wards, and other hospitals, and in private practice. I am sure that no peculiar latitude in point of experiment ever was given by the Managers of this Hospital to the Clinical Professors ; and I never heard, nor do I believe, that any such atrocious licence ever was given by the managers of any other hospital, to any physician or surgeon whom they permitted to read clinical lectures. Mr John Bell has said very truly, (N^o 19.), *that clinical wards were ap-*

pointed, and lectures on the cases of the patients were given in your Hospital, a thing unknown in London, or in other schools ; but he has omitted to state that such lectures soon became known in London and in other schools. The example of this Hospital and this University has been followed in London, and in many other places ; which seems to imply that the institution in question was generally and highly approved of.

He has also said, with some, but not equal truth, (No. 18.), *Your motives for allowing this dangerous innovation were pure and open. No busy searcher into the records of your Infirmary can prove on this occasion a pactum illicitum ! a present of money ! an actual reward for the perversion of the judgment ! a logical or a real bribe ! no, the University had nothing to give, and every thing to gain.* Certainly there was no bribe in the case ; for an excellent and very obvious reason, that there was no occasion for a bribe to induce the Managers to do what they knew to be right. This it is usual for good men to do purely from a sense of duty, or from the persuasion that it may do good to others. It is only to induce men to do what they know to be wrong, as in the case of the bargain made by the Managers with the Corporation of Surgeons in 1738, that bribes are necessary. The establishment of clinical lectures was not a *dangerous* innovation, but just the contrary.

No. 15. *Though a laudable institution, a clinical hospital must be shrouded from the public eye.* No. 31. Having mentioned a clinical ward, he adds, *It is the part of the Hospital to which the most hopelefs and desperate cases are conveyed ; the stage for perpetual experiments ; the scene upon which the public eye is fixed ; the department of your institution where popular prejudices are most to be feared.* No. 20. *And books of experiments, under the undisguised name of clinical experiments, were published by the Professors of the University.*

So, that laudable institution, a clinical hospital, must be shrouded from the public view. But that equally laudable institution, the clinical wards in this Hospital, is the stage of perpetual experiments

ments, the scene upon which the public eye is fixed ; and the experiments performed in them were published by the Professors under the undisguised name of clinical experiments. The inconsistency of the first with the second and third of these assertions is complete and glaring : so they cannot all be true.

As to a clinical hospital, or a clinical ward in a common hospital, being shrouded from public view, such an assertion needs no refutation, and hardly a contradiction. A clinical hospital or ward, in the sense already explained as relating to lectures on the cases of the patients, is precisely that kind of hospital, or that part of a common one, which *cannot* be shrouded from public view ; for it must be peculiarly exposed to it, on account of the extraordinary number of students who frequent it, the attention which they give to the cases of the patients, and the accurate journals which they keep of the progress of the cases, and the reports and prescriptions of the Physicians ; which journals never were and never can be kept secret. Many hospitals, or particular wards of hospitals, may be concealed from public view, and for various reasons, ought to be so ; but with respect to clinical wards, this is neither desirable nor possible.

I never understood that the clinical wards have the honour to be "*the scene on which the public eye is fixed.*" I suspect rather that the public gives itself very little trouble about the clinical wards or the Clinical Professors. The clinical wards are just as public as the common wards of the hospital, but not more so, except in as far as they are generally frequented by a greater number of students. The patients may leave those wards, and often do so, when they please : their friends and relations have as easy access to visit them in the clinical as in any other wards of this Infirmary, and to invite them to go out, and to take them out, when they think fit. Of this liberty, it may well be believed that sometimes a very improper use is made ; some patients choosing, and others being persuaded by their friends, to go out, when they should have staid

in ; that is, when they were but half cured, and had the fairest prospect of being completely cured, if they had persevered in the use of the proper means ; which prospect was lost by their going out of the hospital, and desisting from the use of the proper remedies. This, however, is but a partial evil, and the liberty in question is, upon the whole, a great and general good. Indeed I firmly believe the benevolent purpose of the Royal Infirmary would be absolutely frustrated, if patients were not allowed to leave it when they had a mind, or if their friends were not allowed to see them while they continued in it : for on such terms few or none even of the most wretched would seek relief in such an hospital.

The same considerations may be regarded as a complete refutation of what Mr John Bell has said, (21.), that the professors, “ without the *invidious name of clinical hospital*, have a *safe place* “ where they can *make experiments as dangerous, &c. as they please.*” If the name of *clinical hospital* be invidious, which it ought not to be, the name of *clinical wards* must be at least equally invidious, if not more so ; on account of the contrast between them and the common wards, and the daily opportunities that the patients would have of comparing their own situation, and the manner in which they are treated, in the different wards of the same hospital. This consideration alone, to the best of my judgment, must render *impossible* that pretended peculiar and horrible destination and use of the clinical wards, which Mr John Bell has kindly taken so much pains to explain. (21.) *They have a safe place, where they can make experiments as dangerous, &c. as they please.* Safe here must relate to the Professors and Physicians ; *dangerous*, to the unhappy patients who are the subjects at least, if not the victims of such experiments. The safety in question can mean nothing but safety to the fortune and fame of the Physicians, perhaps also to their necks, if they were such fools and knaves as to attempt to make such experiments on the poor patients entrusted to their care. There can be no doubt,

doubt, that making such dangerous experiments, without regard to any other consideration but the general interests of science, would be a very high misdemeanour, and severely punishable; and if some of the patients died under those experiments, which must be supposed to happen, and indeed is implied in the very notion of dangerous experiments, it would become a very nice question, and one which I am not Lawyer enough to decide, how near the conduct of the Physician approached to wilful murder. It certainly would be at least what is called manslaughter in England, and culpable homicide in Scotland: and though the practitioner might escape hanging for the first homicide of the kind, I do not know what might happen if he should persevere in the same conduct; but I should suspect that the insurance of his neck would be reckoned much more than doubly hazardous.

In the mean time, let it be observed, that Mr John Bell and his clients have bestowed the most extravagant encomiums on the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, on pretence of their having granted a permission to the Clinical Professors to do, in certain wards of this Hospital, such things as no person of common sense and humanity can think of without horror; such things as would be criminal in the eye of the law; such things as it is implied even in that pretended permission, the ordinary Physicians of the Hospital were not allowed to do in the common wards; and such things as no Physicians are allowed to do in their ordinary private practice. The Clinical Professors surely could need no permission from the Managers, and the Managers could never have thought of giving them, either expressly or by implication, a permission to make such experiments, whether dangerous or not, as it was their right and their duty to do in the ordinary exercise of their profession: and such a peculiar permission or privilege to make dangerous experiments, no Physician could or would accept, and no set of managers of any hospital could give, or durst offer, to any physician.

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But let us consider *a safe place for making dangerous experiments* on patients, as relating only to the safety of the Physicians fame and fortune ; implying that the danger and the bad effects, especially the fatal consequences of such experiments, are to be strictly concealed. Even in this limited sense of the expression *a safe place*, I cannot suppose that Mr John Bell and his clients should even for a moment have believed that the clinical wards of this Hospital are such a place. They are frequented by a great number of students, generally from 100 to 150, or more. Every prescription of the Physician, and every effect of it, and every change which occurs in the patient after it, may be known directly to all those students, and in fact is known to most of them, and indirectly but very speedily may be known to all their acquaintance, to every medical student at the University, and to many hundreds or thousands of the inhabitants of this city. Any extraordinary, and especially any dangerous experiment, certainly would be thus generally known, and would become a subject of very general animadversion. If the result of the experiment were unfavourable, above all if it were fatal, it would become a subject of the severest censure among men of sense, and very probably of popular indignation and clamour. Moreover, every prescription of a Clinical Professor stands on record in the clinical books kept by the clerks, and in the book of the apothecary who makes up the medicines : further, every student attending the clinical lectures has access to the clinical books, and may transcribe from them whatever he pleases ; and in fact by far the greater number of the students, either avail themselves of this privilege, or by taking down directly from the Professor's mouth his reports and prescriptions at the time of the public visits, have complete and regular journals of every prescription and symptom, from the hour that the patient entered the ward till he was dismissed from it. The more interesting of these cases are often minutely known to many other students, who even
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take the trouble to transcribe for their own use the whole journals of them. Lastly, to my certain knowledge, several of these journals, I mean especially of unfortunate cases, have been printed and published, adorned and illustrated by very ample and inveterate commentaries, in which the editors have been pleased to revile the Professors in the bitterest terms of contempt and reproach. I myself have had the honour of being thus reviled in print for my practice in the clinical wards ; and I know that some of my colleagues have fared almost as ill as I have done. I dare not venture to give any specimens of this kind of abuse, because I am sure they would not be believed, unless I were to quote the particular publications in which they appeared, and to give the names of the authors of them. This I will not do, as it might be ruinous to some men, who I trust have lived long enough to become sensible both of the folly and the turpitude of their conduct : but if any gentleman wishes to see a specimen of those publications, I can easily gratify him, and convince him of the truth of what I have here stated. But in the mean time any person may form a pretty just notion of the candour and spirit of those publications, and their authors, when I mention, that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all of them were written by young men, whom, on examination, the Professors had found grossly ignorant, and had remitted to their studies, and who endeavoured, by such publications, at once to establish their own character for talents and knowledge, and to take severe vengeance on the Professors.

But the most minute criticism and rigorous animadversion on the conduct of the Clinical Professors are not confined to those students, who, from being remitted to their studies when examined, or from other causes, are irritated against the Professors, and therefore eager to represent in the most unfavourable manner every thing that they say or do. Many of the students attending the clinical lectures, by very ample preliminary education, and even

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by having seen much practice, either in private, or in the army or navy, or in other hospitals, are really well qualified to judge both of the practice and the lectures of the Clinical Professors : many more of the students think themselves well qualified to do so; and are not the less severe and dogmatical in their censures, because their qualifications to judge of what they see and hear are very slender, or perhaps imaginary : many of the students, tho' deficient neither in talents nor in knowledge, and not abounding in vanity, and not wishing to act uncandidly, yet come to attend the clinical lectures, with strong prejudices in favour of opinions and practices widely different from those which the Professors adopt. It must appear to those unacquainted with the subject an extravagant and almost unintelligible paradox to say, that even great and uniform success on the part of the Professor cannot always get the better of such prejudices for or against certain practices and opinions. Yet this paradox is a serious truth. To explain what I mean by it, I must give a particular instance, which is too recent and too serious to be forgotten by those who had the best means of knowing the particulars of it. In summer 1801, (as already mentioned, page 347), during the hottest weather, it happened unfortunately that I got into the clinical wards some patients very ill of the common contagious fever; some of them indeed so long ill, and so very ill, that I had scarce any hopes of saving them. Far beyond my expectations, every one of them recovered; chiefly, as I think, by the uniform and vigorous use of the *very cool* regimen, including not only great cleanliness, but the most thorough ventilation, and the frequent *washing of their bodies with cold water*. No fewer than eight of my students caught the fever; chiefly, as I believe, by their own obstinacy in disregarding my admonitions, and not believing that the fever was contagious. Two of the eight died. One of these was my own patient, from the evening of the fourth, till the morning of the 23d day of his fever, when he died, the circumstances

cumstances of it being such as to baffle all my skill, and Dr Duncan's, during that time. The other of the two, notwithstanding the success which he had seen attending it, held my practice, and especially the cold regimen, in such detestation, that when he was taken ill of the fever, he would not allow me to be called in to see him, and of course took the very opposite method to that which he had seen me follow, keeping himself as warm as he could; till the morning of the fifth day, when he was found dead. I knew nothing of his illness, till one of his companions, with great horror, informed me of his death, and of the circumstances which seemed to have hastened it. This was indeed an extreme case; but nothing can better illustrate the unbounded freedom with which our students think for themselves, and judge of the opinions and practices of their Professors.

It is needless to point out how such young men would think and speak of the practice of a Physician, which consisted of trials of dangerous remedies, and of course was less successful: Yet a precarious success, with many failures, is all that the best of us can pretend to in most diseases.

On the whole, far from believing that the clinical wards in this Hospital are a safe place for the Professors to perform dangerous experiments, I firmly believe they are, for that purpose, the most dangerous place on the face of the earth. Moreover, I must beg leave to state a kind of paradox, but which may easily be explained and established as an important truth, I mean, that there neither is, nor *can be*, in any hospital, or in any private house, a safe place for a physician, strictly and properly so called, to try dangerous experiments. By a physician, in this strict sense, I mean one who does not himself dispense or furnish medicines to his patients, but only gives his advice and prescriptions, or *Recipes* as they are called. All these prescriptions ought to remain, and generally do remain, on the apothecary's file, and even transcribed into his book; always ready to rise in judgment against the physician the very first opportunity.

But any very extraordinary or dangerous prescription of a physician will certainly be preserved, and the effects of it will be marked with the most anxious care, and recorded never to be forgotten; for this good reason, that every apothecary, whether wise or foolish, must be supposed to know, that it is quite enough for him to have to answer for his own blunders and negligence, and for those of the people whom he employs in his shop: and would certainly think his throat cut, if he were made in any degree answerable for the dangerous experiments tried by a physician: which infallibly would be the case, if he could not produce the physician's prescription. Further, some apothecaries, for various reasons good or bad, with some physicians at the devil, and take every opportunity to do them every ill office in their power. Such apothecaries would certainly lose no time in making generally known the supposed dangerous prescriptions, and their real or supposed bad effects. Many apothecaries are very intelligent, honest, benevolent men; and as they know perfectly what medicines, and what doses of them, are dangerous, if they got any dangerous prescriptions to make up, would naturally suspect some mistake, and would immediately apply to the physician, or, if necessary, to the patient or his friends, to have the mistake explained and rectified; which would soon cut short the dangerous experiment. Some years ago I got from my own apothecary a lesson on this point, which gratified me very much. Having occasion to direct a *very strong* medicine for a patient, a maniac, and not choosing that his name should appear on the paper, or even that any servant of the family should go with it to an apothecary's, lest the gentleman's unfortunate situation should become known, I went myself, and put my prescription, fairly written, into the hands of my own apothecary. He perused it repeatedly, with much gravity and attention, to my great edification; and at last began to express his fears with respect to the operation of so strong

strong a medicine ; but on my telling him there was a particular reason for it, and that many gentler medicines had been tried in vain with the patient for whom it was intended, he proceeded to make up the medicine faithfully, *secundum artem* : and in the course of a few weeks had occasion to make it up more than once for the use of the same patient, whose disease, I believe, though not his name, he soon discovered. From that little specimen I could easily judge what would be the fate of any prescription for a violent or dangerous remedy, that came to the shop of an intelligent and honest apothecary ; and could even guess what would probably be the fate of the physician who should venture to give such prescriptions. I presume it is generally understood, that the professional knowledge and duty of an apothecary, with respect to caution as well as fidelity, in making up of medicines, affords an additional security to patients who trust their health and lives to physicians, who give their prescriptions only, without furnishing medicines. But I know of no security, nor can I conceive any, to those patients who trust themselves to the skill, and care, and fidelity, of practitioners, who furnish medicines to the patients that employ them, and who have discovered, that the principles of moral conduct, even with respect to those whose health and life are at stake, are different in physic from what they are in surgery ; and who declare publicly and in print, that they unequivocally approve, in the practice of the medical profession, a latitude which they dare not admit in surgery, and who fairly tell us, that in the practice of physic, the making professed trial of every practice is not good for the sick, but that, on the presumption of general good, in this instance experiments are allowed which must be a partial evil : that is, must be hurtful or fatal to many of those on whom they are tried.

It is easy to see why Mr John Bell and his clients were at pains to state that flimsy and nugatory distinction, between the practice of physic and that of surgery, with respect to trying experiments

on patients. Their object plainly was to represent the practice of physic, especially in the clinical wards of this Infirmary, as a series of the most wanton and dangerous experiments, and to make the clinical wards, and the Professors who practised in them, and the Managers of the Infirmary who permitted Clinical Lectures in this Hospital, objects of general indignation and horror; but by no means to represent the Surgeons, or their wards, in the same unfavourable light; and on the contrary, to state a distinction, or pretended distinction, between surgery and physic, with respect to that important point which they represented so unfavourably as to physic. In this most laudable attempt they had unluckily forgotten, that the surgeon-apothecaries of Edinburgh practise ten or twenty times more as physicians than they do as surgeons. It is therefore highly necessary for their own sake, and still more for that of their patients, that they should retract and disavow that horrible sentiment, with respect to the latitude of trying experiments in physic, which they do not admit in surgery; for, as long as they do hold that detestable principle, their patients, who expect from them not chirurgical but medical assistance, can have no security that they will not every day be made the subjects, and at last become the victims, of unnecessary, long-continued, expensive, and dangerous experiments. Every house, every bedchamber in Edinburgh, is in this respect a clinical ward to a surgeon-apothecary who holds that principle. It is, to use their own words, (21), *a safe place where they can make experiments as dangerous, as expensive, as long-continued as they please!* They may be as long-continued and as expensive as they please; nay, it is their interest to make them so, because they are paid both for their attendance and their medicines. It is a safe place; for the experiments they try, and even the medicines they give, which either by themselves or others whom they employ, they prepare, and make up, and administer, can never be known,

known, unless they please. As little can their unfavourable or fatal effects be known; because these cannot be distinguished from the symptoms belonging to the disease, or the possible effects of common and safe medicines: Nay, when any experiment is likely to end fatally, all danger, that is, all danger to the practitioner who made the experiment, is effectually prevented, by the easy expedient of calling in a physician; whose presence, on such occasions, even though his prescriptions can do no good, never fails to give great satisfaction, and to prevent reflections, as we are frequently told when we are called in to patients who are just dying.

(20.) *Books of experiments, under the undisguised name of CLINICAL EXPERIMENTS, were published by the Professors of the University.* There is peculiar merit and delicacy in this happy allusion, which can relate to no book but one; and that one a volume published more than twenty years ago by DR FRANCIS HOME, *Emeritus* Professor of Physic and *Materia Medica* in this University, and who is at present, and has been for many years, one of the Ordinary Managers of this Infirmary. If Dr Home had done me the honour to ask my advice or opinion about the title of his work, I should certainly have endeavoured to dissuade him from giving it the one which it bears, *Clinical Experiments, Histories, and Dissections*. I could at least have pointed out to him, that such a title might easily be misunderstood, and still more easily misrepresented. I could have convinced him, that such a simple title as *Clinical Histories*, or *Clinical Cases*, or *Clinical Observations*, would have fully conveyed his meaning; and that there was no occasion, in the whole course of his book, to use the word *Experiment*, even once.

The fact, that his book was published with such a title, and that almost every piece of practice mentioned in it is called an experiment, must give to every man of sense and candour a very
strong

strong presumption, that those experiments were at least very innocent: that there was nothing in them of which the Author had reason to be ashamed, or others afraid; nothing that could make either him or the clinical wards objects of jealousy to the rich, and of horror to the poor.

But this presumption *must* instantly have been converted into certainty in every person who perused the book, or even who read the table of its contents: from which it appears, that those experiments are in general the common practice of physic: the most common and approved remedies, employed in those diseases, and in that manner, in which they have been most generally used, and are most strongly recommended. To the best of my judgment, at least nine out of ten of the medicines, whose effects he has recorded, are of this kind: and of the few medicines not in common use, and not even generally known in this country, which he employed, I do not believe there was one in any degree dangerous. These things are so notorious and undeniable, that they soon put an end to the illiberal and malevolent observations which Dr Home's book, or rather the title of it, produced, when it was first published.

To give here an abridgment or abstract of his whole book, a large octavo volume, would be tedious and unnecessary: but in proof and illustration of what I have said, I shall give a few specimens of it.

The first section of it is entitled, "Experiments with regard to the most proper time of giving the bark in intermittents." It had long been known, though for more than a century it had been keenly disputed, that the Peruvian bark was a very safe medicine, and in general an easy, speedy, and almost certain cure for intermittent fevers: but physicians, as became them, continued, and still continue, to dispute, whether its good effects were obtained most quickly and surely by giving a few, perhaps two or three,
large

large doses of it, as near as possible to the time when the fit was expected; or by giving many smaller doses of it, beginning as soon as possible after the fit was over. There were strong testimonials, from real or pretended experience, in favour of each of those modes of practice, and against the other. Nor was it even allowed to remain purely a question of fact, to be decided by frequent and careful experience, and impartial testimony. It was blended and confounded, to the great puzzling of many students, and of some practitioners, with various medical theories and reasonings, about the causes of intermittent fevers, and the mode of operation of the bark, on the fluids, or on the solids, on the nerves, or on the stomach.

Dr Cullen, who, at the time to which I allude, when Dr Home was making and publishing those experiments, was Professor of the Practice of Physic in this University, declared strongly in favour of giving the bark as near as possible to the time of the expected fit, (First Lines, 232. 4.) This practice coincided best with his theory both of the disease, and of the mode of operation of the remedy. He had also got some well-attested cases, in which it appeared, that one or two large doses, such as a quarter of an ounce, or even half an ounce, of the bark, taken within an hour of the time when the fit was expected, had completely cured the disease, after it had continued for a long time, and had resisted many smaller doses of the bark taken during the whole of the interval between the fits.

On the other hand, many practitioners declared, that when the bark was given in large doses just before the fit was expected, it often did no good, and sometimes was thrown up by vomiting, so quickly, that it had scarce a chance of doing good: nay, some went so far as to say, that they had known the bark, when given in that manner, and well retained on the stomach, do harm instead of good, and make the subsequent fit more severe than any
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of the preceding had been. It was also well known, or at least verified by so many examples as hardly to admit of dispute, that in whatever way the bark was administered, it did not, in general, cure or stop the intermittent at once, so as to prevent the return of even one other fit, and that often two, three, or four other fits took place, though the bark was administered faithfully during the intervals; but that these fits became gradually lighter, and less perfect, and at last ceased altogether. This common observation strongly implied that some part at least, if not the whole, of the good effects of the bark, depended upon its slow operation in the body, rather than on its immediate effect on the stomach.

Dr Home, naturally thinking that this was a question of some importance, not only with a view to economy in dispensing the bark, but with a view to the ease, and comfort, and speedy recovery of patients labouring under intermittent fevers, and being unable to decide among such inconsistent testimonies and reasonings, very innocently at least, if not laudably, resolved to administer the bark to some patients in the one way, to some in the other, and carefully to observe the result. The number of these experiments, or of the patients on whom they were tried, was fourteen: and the result was strongly in favour of giving it as soon as possible after the fit, and against giving it within two or three hours of the time when the fit is expected. In eight of the cases, when given just before the fit was expected, it did not prevent the fit; in five cases, when given just after the fit, it prevented the accession of another. Whether Mr John Bell and his clients acquiesce in this conclusion or not, they must at least acknowledge, that there was nothing dangerous or horrible in the experiment.

The second section of Dr Home's book contains an account of his practice in the common continued fever; and the remedies
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which he used in it were almost all of them the common and most approved remedies employed by Physicians in that disease; such as the Peruvian bark, blisters, fomentation of the legs, camphor, tartar emetic, James's powder, and opiates. Two remedies were employed by him, in a few cases, which were not in common use in this country; the first of these was the tincture of cantharides, in small doses, only twenty drops, twice or thrice a-day. This use of the medicine had been strongly recommended, many years before, by Dr Hillary, an eminent Physician, who practised in the West Indies, and who is well known by his book on the diseases of Barbadoes. The same medicine, cantharides, had been in great repute, and general use, in the cure of such fevers, for more than a hundred years, but applied in a different manner; externally, in the form of blistering plasters. Many Physicians, however, had thought that the good effects, real or supposed, of such plasters, depended not upon their local operation on the skin, but on some portion of the cantharides absorbed, and taken into the blood, and conveyed all over the body. In most of the cases in which Dr Home gave it internally, it appeared evidently to do good; and in none of them did it any harm: all the patients recovered soon and easily.

The other uncommon medicine which Dr Home tried in the cure of continued fever, was the *Petasites*, or Butter-bur, which had long ago been in some estimation, and had afterwards fallen, I believe very deservedly, into neglect and contempt. But it had been again brought into use in Russia, and extolled as very successful in the cure of a malignant fever which prevailed in that country. Dr Home gave it to *one* patient in a fever, for three or four days. The fever diminished during its use; but it did not appear that the medicine itself had any sensible effect; and there is reason to believe, that though a very innocent, it is a very insignificant drug.

Perhaps it will be thought that I have selected the first two sections of Dr Home's book, as being less exceptionable than the rest of it: but any person who shall take the trouble to peruse the whole volume, will be fully convinced that it is all of the same kind with the sample which I have given of it. Nay, to cut short all such surmises, I shall mention here, without scruple, and without fear of giving offence to my venerable preceptor and colleague, the only two pieces of practice or experiments of his, that ever I heard of as being made the subject of reprehension. The first of these was the use of vipers (their flesh, and the broth made of it) internally, as a cure for certain inveterate diseases of the skin, which by some Physicians are called Herpes, by others Leprosy. Vipers had been employed in such diseases, and in many others, and highly extolled, by some of the greatest of the ancient Physicians, and by many of the moderns. Yet though they still kept their place in our dispensatories, and were really to be had at Apothecaries Hall in London, and in many apothecaries shops, they were very little used in practice. This strongly implied that they had not in reality been found very useful: besides, there was reason to suspect that they had originally been introduced into practice in consequence of some superstitious notions which were common to the Greeks and Romans; whether borrowed by them from the Jews, and their brazen serpent, or not, I am not antiquarian enough to determine. Still, however, it was possible that a remedy might be good, though originally introduced by superstition; and that a good remedy might have fallen into unmerited neglect. It was at least certain, by very ample experience, that the flesh of vipers, and the broth made of it, was a perfectly innocent and wholesome food, just like the flesh of eels, or that of tortoises, commonly called turtles. It had often been used as an article of diet, and considered as a very powerful restorative. Dr Home thought it worth while to try that mild and safe remedy, for the cure of an obstinate disease,

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which generally requires, and sometimes baffles, our most powerful, and what may be called our roughest medicines. He gave vipers to three patients, one of whom grew better under their use, but was not cured; seemingly because no more vipers could be got for him. The second in about a fortnight was almost cured; but being informed by some foolish person what she was getting, would take no more of the medicine. The third of those patients, a girl of fifteen, who had been covered from her infancy with a dry scaly eruption, was cured in a fortnight.

I am far from contending, that a few such cases are sufficient to entitle vipers to resume their former honourable station in our dispensatories, from which they have most ignominiously been dismissed within these few years, both by the London and the Edinburgh Colleges of Physicians: but I contend strongly for the following propositions; that the vipers did no harm in the cases in which they were given; that every practitioner of competent knowledge must have been sure of this beforehand; and that the prejudices of the people in this country against such an article of food or medicine, are groundless and absurd; just like the horror which the Spaniards of South America, so lately as the time of Commodore Anson, entertained against eating turtle. Moreover, though I should not trust to vipers for the cure of herpes or leprosy, I think it highly probable that some diseases of the skin may be cured by them. For example, if a poor sailor, by living on the common but unwholesome seafaring diet, had grown scorbutic and scaly, I dare say the flesh and the broth of vipers, provided only he could get enough of it, would contribute greatly to his cure: and if a rich Alderman was grown mangy by over feeding, I dare say he might be cured by living for two or three months on viper broth and bread, as certainly as by living for the same time on chicken broth, or any other wholesome low diet: and I have no doubt, that if all the Counts and Princes of the holy Roman

Empire, a hundred years ago, had got the mange, vipers would have been prescribed for them all. Yet that simple and innocent piece of practice, merely because it was uncommon in this country, was most absurdly and unjustly made a subject of reproach to Dr Home.

The other piece of practice or experiment, which by some persons, who ought to have known better, was spoken of in terms of reproach, to me always appeared in a very different light. I allude to his experiments with respect to the use of blisters as a cure for continued fevers. For this purpose they had long been in general use; for it happened that Physicians of very different sects or systems in physic had yet agreed, though for different reasons, in using blisters in continued fevers. I myself know of three totally different theories, all of which I believe to be erroneous, that made Physicians think it necessary to use them; I mean that of evacuating morbid matter, that of resolving viscid lentor of the blood, and that of relaxing or of taking off spasm from the extreme vessels on the surface of the body: and I believe there have been some other theories, or at least some peculiar modifications of these, all favouring the same kind of practice; yet many Physicians, between twenty and forty years ago, had begun to distrust it. The practice, however, was so firmly established, that however much we distrusted it, few if any of us dared to omit it in urgent cases. Dr Home, like many other Physicians about that time, distrusted the supposed good effects of blisters in fevers; but used them, in compliance with custom and system. He carefully observed their effects, and very candidly published the result of his observations. This result was very unfavourable: in seven experiments, that is, of seven patients labouring under continued fever, whose cure was trusted chiefly to blisters, four died, one grew worse under their use, and the other two were evidently no better for them. If this had been a trial of a new remedy, I should have thought it highly blameable:

blameable : but it was just the reverse ; it was the faithful employment of a common long-established practice, one so firmly established, that if it had been omitted in those cases which ended fatally, this would have been considered as a bold or wanton experiment : nay, it would have been supposed, that the patients died for want of blistering. Dr Home had no peculiar merit or demerit in the practice which he followed ; but very great merit in candidly making known its bad success. If other Physicians had been as candid in giving an account of their bad success with different remedies, or but half as ready to publish their unsuccessful as their successful cases, whatever medicines they employed, it would have been well for their science, and better for mankind.

Any person who is curious or distrustful, may soon be convinced that these are my genuine sentiments on the subject, and not assumed or professed to serve a particular purpose on the present occasion. In my *Conspectus Medicinæ Theoreticæ*, published near twenty years ago, after mentioning pretty fully the practice of blistering in continued fevers, and the various theories or reasons assigned for it, and my own distrust, both of the practice and the theories in question, I alluded to Dr Home's experiments on the subject in the following words, Parag. 1615. *Neque hic silentio præter erire fas est experimenta clari auctoris, infelicia quidem illa, sed non eo minus utilia, quæque ipse honesto et liberali animo palam indicavit. Hic auctor in experimenta de febrium remediis incumbens, ægros aliquot, posthabitis plerisque aliis auxiliis, vesicatoriis fere solis commisit ; febricitantium vero hoc modo tractatorum major pars periit ; eorumque qui evaserant, nemo multum boni ab illo remedio percepit, plerique haud parum mali.*

To those who are not of the medical profession it may be necessary, but it will be easy, to explain the great importance of that candid publication of Dr Home, in which he acknowledged the bad success that he had met with from the use of blisters in the cure of continued fevers. Probably there were at that time, in this island

island alone, many hundreds of practitioners in the constant habit of employing blisters in the cure of that disease, *bona fide* believing that they were one of the best remedies that could be used, and of such importance, that they themselves would have been highly culpable if they had not employed them. Many of those practitioners might have occasion to treat every year, twenty, fifty, or a hundred patients ill of fevers, and probably many hundreds of such patients in the course of their lives; all of whom must by that practice have been made to suffer much pain and inconvenience, without any adequate benefit, or without any benefit at all; and several of them every year must have perished by having their cure trusted to that unavailing and often pernicious remedy, implying the omission or neglect of other remedies, which might either have cured them speedily, or, by alleviating their sufferings, and breaking the force of the fever, might, in the course of a few days, have brought it to a favourable termination. Many of the best practitioners, with whom I have had an opportunity of conversing on this subject, agree with me, and with Dr Home, in rejecting blisters as a general cure for continued fevers; though we admit that they are a valuable remedy in some other diseases, even of the febrile kind; nay, that they may sometimes relieve certain symptoms which occasionally take place in continued fevers: but for this purpose I believe we have other remedies far preferable to blisters. To the best of my knowledge and belief, not the thirtieth part of the number of blisters is at this time employed in the cure of continued fevers that was employed in the cure of them thirty years ago; and I am convinced, that this essential improvement in that important subject of practice has been in a great measure owing to Dr Home's publication. Yet so tenacious are Physicians of their old opinions and practices, that several of them, to my knowledge, would never submit to be set right on that point; and continued to prescribe blisters for the cure of continued fevers as long as they lived.

lived. Nay, I shrewdly suspect that there are, even in this country, some Physicians who faithfully adhere to the old system; chiefly, I believe, some of the older members of our faculty, and very few, if any, under the age of fifty. Such good orthodox adherents of the old school will of course regard all that I have here said of blisters as a most damnable heresy; and when I declare, as I can do with truth, that I have treated successfully many hundreds of patients ill of continued fevers without the help of one blister, they will no more believe me, than I should believe them, if they were to tell me, that they had cured five hundred such patients by blisters alone, without the help of any other remedy.

Such was the nature, and such one of the effects, of that book, the title of which appeared so formidable, and to which Mr John Bell alludes, with such confidence, in proof of the horrible nature and purpose of clinical lectures.

How then, it may reasonably be asked, can the particulars of such innocent and common practice be called experiments; or what propriety or what joke was there in giving to the book in question the title of clinical experiments? Even this may easily be explained; and I think it worth while to do so. In the first place, in every part of Natural Philosophy, every change produced by human contrivance is called an experiment; which means no more than a contrived observation. An observation, as distinguished from an experiment, is the remarking any event or change which occurred from natural causes, and without any human contrivance. We have observations on eclipses, on the tides, on earthquakes, on eruptions of volcanos, and on the symptoms of diseases: We have experiments in mechanical philosophy, with balls of ivory or of clay, with magnets, and prisms, and electrical machines; in chemistry, with acids and alkalis, metals and gases, heat and cold; and in physic, with medicines and regimen. It would be well for mankind, and best of all for our most noble faculty, if our experi-
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ments in phyc were as certain and uniform as those in chemistry, or in mechanical philosophy: but as long as the human body is a living subject, implying the existence and co-operation of another principle of change, infinitely variable in its condition, and at least as important in its influence as the medicines which we prescribe, that kind of certainty cannot be attained. Our practice is therefore necessarily not only a system of experiments, but a constant series of precarious experiments; some of which approach near to certainty, but others are far removed from it. The nearer they are brought to certainty the better for the patients, and for the practitioners, the teachers, and the learners of medicine. But if they were all brought to perfect certainty, they would equally be experiments, in the philosophical sense already explained; and such experiments as every student ought to see, and attend to, in all their circumstances; just as the students of chemistry and natural philosophy see the experiments, even the most familiar and certain, in those branches of science. A student of phyc would soon acquire more useful knowledge by a course of such experiments, than could be extracted from some thousands of our most learned volumes; as a student of natural philosophy, who is not an incorrigible blockhead, will learn more of the laws of nature, with respect to matter and motion, from seeing experiments made with two balls of ivory, or two masses of soft clay, than could be distilled from all the writings of Aristotle, and of all the philosophers that succeeded him till the time of Galileo.

But further, medicine, from the very nature of the subject on which it operates, and from the various purposes which those who practise it have in view, may be regarded in several very different lights. It is a curious and interesting branch of natural philosophy; it is a trade or craft by which many persons live; it is a practical art, the object of which is to cure diseases, when this can be done; and when it cannot be done, at least to alleviate the sufferings

ferings of the patients. Every piece of medical practice may be regarded in relation to each of those views, which are in no degree inconsistent with one another; just as the practitioner, or any other man, may be considered, not as what he is in himself, but what he is in relation to others. The same man, in different relations, will be thought and called a father, a son, a husband, a brother, a friend or enemy, debtor or creditor, plaintiff or defendant. Even so, the most common piece of medical practice, considered in relation to the patient, may be an act of the greatest kindness that one human being can do to another, and, as such, will always be gratefully remembered by the person whom it saved from death, or relieved from pain and sickness, or to whom it restored those who were dearest to him. Such things are done times innumerable every day by practitioners, who have no view either to the advancement of their science, or to any pecuniary emolument to themselves. But much *good* medical practice is done, and many a learned prescription is written, by Physicians, who think no more, either of benevolence to their patients, or of the improvement of physic, than the apothecary does who makes up the medicines, or the undertaker who furnishes the coffins which are wanted, at the shop-price of their respective goods: it is the Doctor's trade, by which he must live, and he is honestly labouring in his vocation, thinking only of the one thing needful. The same pieces of practice, when the Physician has it in view carefully to observe and record the result, to arrange it with similar observations, and from many such compared together, to deduce general conclusions for the advancement of his science and the improvement of his art, are regarded as experiments; but surely they are experiments of the most innocent and laudable kind. Thousands of these experiments may escape the observation of the patients themselves, as well as of those who are about them, and most deeply interested in their welfare. Nothing violent, nothing un-

usual may be attempted ; no extraordinary or distressing symptoms may occur, the former symptoms of the disease may soon be relieved, or the disease may be completely cured. In other cases, the symptoms may gradually grow worse ; the disease may run its natural course, and terminate fatally in the usual manner ; the practice employed, or experiments made, not availing the patient. But in many cases, the practice or experiment which the Physician is obliged to try, in order to give the patient his best or only chance for life, must be of such a nature as to excite anxiety and alarm. The remedy employed may be uncommon ; it may be violent in appearance, or even in reality, from its immediate effects. Nay, it may be dangerous, and the Physician may even have intimated this to the patient or his friends. But as on such occasions the danger, in case of failure, is very great to the Physician himself, I mean in point of fame and fortune, this kind of practice or experiment is but seldom tried by regular Physicians of established character ; too seldom indeed, to the best of my judgment. The case I believe is different with the irregulars, who have every thing to gain, and nothing to lose ; who know, that whatever good they do, the world proclaimeth, and whatever ill they do, the earth covereth. Yet such irregulars, though they kill many patients by their rash and blundering practice, have certainly cured some in very unfavourable situations, by means well known to the regulars, but which, on account of their real or supposed danger, these were afraid to employ. It must even be acknowledged, however mortifying it may be to the pride of the regular faculty, that we owe to the quacks the knowledge and use of several of the most powerful medicines which we now generally employ ; such as opium, antimony, mercury, and many others. Still, however, the number of really useful medicines bears so small a proportion to the vast multitude of useless drugs that from time to time have been introduced, and highly extolled,

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both by quacks and by regular Physicians, that the regular faculty have in general a strong tendency to distrust all new medicines, and of course a reluctance even to try them. It was long ago remarked by Bacon, and the observation is just as true at present as it was in his time, that regular Physicians are always more disposed to expect advantage in medicine from the improvement of the general plan of practice in a disease, than from the extraordinary virtues of any particular medicine that may be proposed; while those not of the medical profession, being ignorant or regardless of that kind of improvement in physic, are always credulous with respect to the good effects of every new medicine that they hear recommended. The reason of this difference is obvious; those not of our profession hear only of the few cases in which such medicines were or seemed to be successful. Physicians know to their sorrow the many cases in which they do no good, and some in which they do harm; and are necessarily forced to doubt, whether, in the most favourable cases, they had really done that good which both practitioners and patients had most confidently believed. These things are so well and so generally known, that most persons of competent judgment, if they had read this vindication of the Clinical Professors, from the charge of trying wanton and dangerous experiments on their patients, without knowing what gave occasion to it, would have regarded it as mere affectation: but the strong passage quoted from Mr John Bell's pamphlet will effectually preclude all such surmises on this occasion.

There is yet another circumstance in medical practice or experiments on patients which I must beg leave to state in its true light, because it is on all occasions, but especially in an hospital or in a clinical ward, easily misrepresented by the malevolent, and really misunderstood by those who see only what is done, or perhaps but a part of it, and who know nothing of the reasons for which such things are done. To this kind of practice I alluded

in my former Memorial, (page 140.), in a few observations that I made on the necessary employment of our most powerful remedies, such as are often required in the most urgent and dangerous cases, in which the patient's chance for recovery is very small, and in which there may be even some danger from the violent effects of the remedies themselves. Nothing can be easier than to impute to the operation of those strong remedies all the unfavourable symptoms, or even the death of the patient, if such things happen after their use. But candour and common sense require that the most favourable construction should be put on the conduct of a Physician in those trying and vexatious circumstances. A very little reflection must convince every person of good sense, that it is not alone the danger, real or supposed, of any piece of practice that ought to be considered, but the difference between that danger and the danger to which the patient was exposed from his disease. I do not think the danger of any common medicine, or common mode of practice, if employed with but tolerable judgment, nearly so great as has often been said, both by the vulgar, who are sometimes pleased to fancy that Physicians had killed those patients who died under their care, and by Physicians themselves, who now and then have the goodness to pay that compliment to their brethren. The result of my own observation on the practice of physic has been a strong conviction, that for one patient who is killed by the regular faculty by the use of violent and dangerous remedies, twenty, or perhaps a hundred, are allowed to die without getting that chance of recovery which such powerful remedies would have given them. But supposing the violent remedies to which I allude to be as dangerous as ever was pretended, if the danger of the disease was still greater and more urgent, or if the disease was almost certainly fatal unless such remedies were employed, the use of them must be considered as lessening the danger of the patient. It ought also to be considered, in another point
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of view, that the state of the body in certain diseases greatly lessens the danger of some of our most violent remedies, at the same time that it makes those remedies most peculiarly necessary. Nay, there are certain conditions of the body, in particular diseases, that make it almost insensible to some of our most powerful medicines, or at least make it necessary to administer these medicines in quantities much larger than would be given, or could be required, in other diseases; perhaps in such quantities as would be certainly fatal to a strong person in perfect health. I believe very violent fever, and certainly violent internal inflammation connected with high fever, while it requires large bleeding, at the same time enables the body to bear it with less danger and inconvenience than it could have done in health. In the course of such a disease, a patient, who had fainted on the first and second bleeding, though not very large, has been known to bear two or three subsequent bleedings, much larger, without fainting, and with great benefit. In dropy it often happens, especially when the head becomes affected, that strong purges have no effect, though given in double or triple the common doses; yet if given in still larger doses, they sometimes answer perfectly well. In the locked jaw, and I understand the case to be the same in the hydrophobia, (from the bite of a mad dog), opium, in double or perhaps ten times its usual dose, may have little or no effect; yet if given in still larger doses, it may cure a painful and horrible disease, which otherwise would be fatal in two days. It can scarce be necessary to say, that in such cases no Physician in his senses would prescribe at once bleeding to such an amount, or such enormous quantities of strong medicines, as may eventually be found necessary. It is to be presumed, that all such pieces of practice will be tried at first in moderation, though with vigour, and repeated and pushed farther, as circumstances may require. On this plan, I conceive, that even the positive danger from them must be but small,

small, and the relative danger from them, estimated by their influence on a still more dangerous disease, must be still smaller, or next to nothing. But when only the marvellous part of such practice is told, without mentioning the reasons of it, and the precautions with which it was tried, it will necessarily be regarded as an experiment of the most unwarrantable and horrible kind. This kind of misrepresentation I myself have experienced, from some of my own pupils, not from any malevolence on their part, but quite the contrary, from their being highly pleased with my success by such practice in some very unfavourable cases; of which they told only the wonderful part, suppressing, or perhaps forgetting, what was of much more consequence. Some of those cases, if Mr John Bell and his clients had known of them, would have been much better for their purpose than the pretended bold experiment of giving arsenic for the cure of an intermittent fever: which by the by was no experiment of mine; for at the time when his pamphlet was published, I had not once given arsenic in an intermittent fever. Patients, whether in private practice or in hospitals, unless they are informed of it by some malicious meddling persons, cannot know either what medicines, or what doses of them they are getting; nor consequently can they be alarmed with the notion of being made the subjects of such experiments: but sometimes it becomes necessary, both in public and private practice, to employ very rough and violent remedies, both the kind and degree of which must be well known to the patient, and to all about him; and when such remedies prove unsuccessful, as must often happen, the Physician who prescribed them must at least be blamed, and may think himself fortunate if he do not become the object of indignation and horror. In illustration of what I have said, I shall mention two examples of this kind, which befel myself in the clinical wards; both of which cases, though one of them ended favourably, gave me for some time much uneasiness;

as I feared they might have excited some popular clamour, not only against myself, but against the clinical wards, and the Hospital in general.

In January 1799, I got into the clinical ward a young man, whose situation was such, that I judged it necessary to employ on him, without delay, some pieces of practice, which to himself, and his friends, and the other patients, must have appeared at least very severe and cruel, if not very dangerous experiments. Cold as the weather was, he was laid out naked on the floor, and large quantities of cold water were dashed all over his body and limbs; then he was wrapt up in blankets, and put to bed, and got large doses of laudanum. These practices were frequently repeated as long as he lived; but he died in two days. The other patients and their visitors, who saw what was doing, and must have heard repeatedly that the doses of laudanum which he was getting were uncommonly great, could scarce fail to think that he was killed by the practice which I employed. Every Physician will understand, even by what I have said of it, that his disease could be nothing but the locked jaw, or *tetanus*, a disease of most excruciating pain, and such extreme danger, that very few recover from it, and most of those who are attacked by it die within five days; especially when it is produced by a wound, which was the case in that patient. In him it had subsisted three days before I saw him, and in that time had made very rapid progress; so that I was almost certain he could not live two days longer, unless the progress of the disease could be stopped by some very powerful remedies. I knew of none so likely to do good as those that I employed. I did not consider them as dangerous, though one of them, the affusion of cold water, was certainly severe. At any rate, the danger from the remedies could bear no proportion to that from the disease, and the employing of them was certainly lessening the danger of the patient, and giving him his best or only chance for his life. But these things his friends,

friends, and the other patients could not know : and very probably, even when they heard that his disease was a locked jaw, they would think of no other danger from it but that of the patient being gradually starved to death ; which I understand is the vulgar notion of the nature and danger of a locked jaw. It would have been in vain to tell them, that the severe practice of dashing cold water on the body of the patient in that disease had been recommended by Hippocrates two thousand two hundred years ago, had been neglected for two thousand years or more, and had been revived, and again brought into repute, within these thirty years ; and that, next to it, the administration of opium, in large doses, frequently repeated, seemed the most powerful remedy ; and that both together formed, if not the whole, at least by far the greatest part of the practice, which every Physician of competent knowledge would wish to have employed on himself, or on his best friends, if they were ill of the same disease ; and that it would be my indispensable duty to employ the same remedies, if possible with greater vigour, especially the opium, in still larger doses, in any similar case. To this hour I know not how I have escaped those animadversions, which I expected for my practice, and my bad success in that case ; unless it was, that the conversation of my pupils sufficiently explained to the other patients the urgent danger of the disease, and the necessity of trying those seemingly cruel and dangerous experiments.

On another occasion, in summer 1797, I made a still narrower escape from those reproaches, or those extravagant encomiums, which Mr John Bell and his clients have so liberally bestowed on the Clinical Professors. A young man came under my care in the clinical ward, who had been ill of a pleurisy for several days. The symptoms were so uncommonly violent, that there could be no doubt about the nature of the disease, the urgent danger of it, and the only remedy, namely, large bleeding, that could give the patient

tient a chance for his life. The youngest of my pupils must have known all these things just as well as I did. The remedy certainly was not spared ; my man underwent three large bleedings within twenty-four hours, but without the least benefit ; indeed he evidently grew worse, and after the third bleeding my clerk came to tell me that he was much worse, and seemed to be dying. This was no surprise to me, who had been aware of his great danger from the moment I saw him ; but as I was not disposed to give him up, without using every effort to save him, I went immediately to the Hospital, and finding his strength still entire, though the symptoms of his disease were dreadfully urgent, I instantly ordered another bleeding for him, and staid to see it performed, and to observe the effect of it. It was the largest I ever witnessed, and much larger than any bleeding that I ever prescribed. I expected and wished to have made him faint by that bleeding : for such fainting, I am confident, often does good ; but this, like every other point in physic, has been the subject of keen and endless dispute. He bore the loss of thirty-two ounces (a full English quart) of blood without fainting ; and I durst go no farther. Next day I found him worse than ever, but still, as I thought, able to bear another bleeding ; which I conceived might give him some chance, though but a very small one, for life. It was tried without delay, and I staid to observe the effect of it. To ensure, as I thought, his fainting, I made him sit erect when he was bled ; and in that posture he bore the loss of more than twenty ounces of blood ; making in all ninety-seven ounces, that were taken from him in three successive days, but within forty-eight hours. At that time he was seized with hiccup, and I could observe some spasms in his face ; so that it might be said, and in fact was said, without exaggeration, that I had bled him into convulsions. One or two of my pupils, who were very attentive to all that passed, took fright, and ran out of the room, believing all was over, and that the man was instantly to die in my hands ; and

I confess I had my own share of uneasiness for some minutes ; though, for a reason that I shall mention afterwards, I was not so much disconcerted as my pupils were. On laying the man down on his bed, the spasms went off, as soon and as easily as a fainting fit commonly does ; and from that moment the patient was in a manner cured ; the violent symptoms of his disease instantly ceased, and, without the help of any other remedy, he recovered as well as any patient I ever saw in that disease, and much faster than such patients commonly do. That was his good luck, and mine too ; for if he had died at that time, it would have been a reproach to me as long as I lived, probably even to the Hospital in which I practised, and to the medical school in which I have the honour to be a Professor : for in two or three weeks, that is, by the time my man was dismissed cured from the Hospital, the history of his case was known at Geneva ; some gentlemen from that city having been my pupils at that time, and having, as I soon learned, regaled their friends at home with an account of a mode of practice very different from any that they had ever seen or heard of. I take it for granted, that they would have been at least as communicative if my practice had been unsuccessful. Such is the safety of the clinical wards as a place in which to try dangerous experiments. In that interesting case, if I had stopped short after the third bleeding, and allowed my man to die, which to the best of my judgment he must have done in two days, or perhaps in one, I should have had the credit of doing all that could be done to save him. If I had stopped short after the fourth large bleeding, and allowed him to die, which I am confident would have been his fate, it would have been a noble subject of dispute, whether his disease or my excessive bleedings (seventy-five ounces in thirty hours) had killed him. But if he had died after the fifth bleeding, whether instantly or not, there could have been no dispute at all that I had killed him by such horrible bleeding. In lecturing on that case,

I wished to tell my pupils, but durst not, because I had forgotten my authority, which I afterwards found in a biographical book, that DR RADCLIFFE, the greatest Physician in London about a hundred years ago, when ill of the same disease (pleurisy) at the age of sixty, was bled to the amount of a hundred ounces in one day ; by which means he was cured, though he had been so ill that for some time he was absolutely despaired of. Radcliffe was a brute, but he was not a fool ; and certainly would neither have submitted to such practice, nor, what I presume was the case, have directed it for himself, without knowing that it was necessary ; and though not perhaps altogether safe, at least not near so dangerous as the disease which it was intended to cure. It happened, however, that at that time I could explain to my pupils why I was not so much alarmed as some of them had been when my patient fell into spasms, instead of fainting, on his last great bleeding. About a twelvemonth before, I had met with the same embarrassing symptom repeatedly, in a young lady ill of the same disease. In her the symptoms were so violent and obstinate, that five bleedings were required in the course of a week ; every one of which, except the first, produced strong spasms instead of fainting. Though the absolute quantity of blood taken from her was much less than that taken from my clinical patient, yet relatively to her bulk or weight it was more. Without that rough practice, or even with less of it, I firmly believe she must have died ; but by a favourable concurrence of circumstances she recovered perfectly. Her father, having been bred to physic, understood thoroughly the nature, the danger, and the method of cure of her disease ; her mother was a woman of uncommon firmness and good sense ; and though both of them had in a manner given her up, they were well pleased that we (Mr Ruffell and myself) should do every thing that we thought could give her a chance for recovery.

It can scarce be necessary to say, that in similar cases I should be ready, and think myself bound, to employ the same severe and seemingly dangerous practice which proved successful in those cases: but even if it had been unsuccessful in them, I must equally have employed it in similar cases, as being on the whole the best, or only successful practice that I know of, in that disease, and some others of the same general nature. If my man had died, when I only intended to make him faint, by a large bleeding, it would not have deterred me from submitting to the same practice myself; which but a few months after I was fain to do, twice in one day, and with great benefit, when I had the misfortune to be ill of the same disease. It would be folly to expect that in every case, and very doubtful whether in the very next case, in which I may have occasion to try it, I shall be successful by such practice; yet in the clinical wards, and in private practice, equally, it will be my duty to try it.

What I have stated thus strongly, and particularly, with respect to those two extraordinary and very dangerous cases, I must presume, till I have evidence of the contrary, to be equally true with respect to the practice of the Clinical Professors, in the more common and less dangerous cases which every day come under their care: namely, that, to the best of their judgment, they have hitherto done, and will continue to do, what is best for the patients; whether this be the employing of new or of old, of severe or gentle, of safe or of dangerous remedies. This is unquestionably their duty to the patients in the first place, and in the second place their duty to their pupils: for it is a proposition too plain to admit either of doubt, or proof, or illustration, that whatever is best for the patients, is also best for the students to see and learn; and, I may add, is most for the ease, the honour, and the advantage, of the Professors themselves.

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The two striking cases which I have stated are not given as a fair sample of the common practice, either by myself or my colleagues, in the clinical wards, but quite the contrary; as the two, of all that I could remember, which might most naturally have been misunderstood, or most easily misrepresented, and quoted as instances of the most wanton, cruel, and dangerous experiments. In this horrible light I dare say they will still appear to many people, who have no notion, either of the violence and danger of some diseases, or of what the human body can do or suffer. Those happy patients, who have never felt such diseases or such practice, but who are every day suffering the pangs, that is, paying the regulated price, of laziness, luxury, pride, and riches, and who are anxious only to settle whether they shall be bilious or nervous, whether they shall have the gout or the liver, whether they shall go to Cheltenham or to Tunbridge, to Bath or to Margate, must regard such practice with peculiar horror; dreading lest some bloody-minded physician should employ it on their own persons. But they need not be afraid: even a sucking Doctor would not think of killing the goose that laid him golden eggs day by day; and they may be assured, that, as long as there remains in an apothecary's shop one nauseous useless drug, no Physician will prescribe for them a remedy that might endanger such precious lives; lives which, whatever they may be in other respects, and to other people, are inestimable to our most noble Faculty, and will always be cherished with care, and lengthened, if possible, to the age of the antediluvian patriarchs.

The rougher and seemingly dangerous practice, of which I have given such examples, is never employed by any of us without reluctance, or without the most urgent necessity; and in private practice, especially among patients in affluent circumstances, it is seldom employed without the authority of a consultation; which Physicians, in such cases, are glad to propose, at least as much for their own sake as for that of their patients. Even in judging of
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the danger, of certain pieces of medical practice, and of the supposed demerit of the Physician who prescribed them in cases which terminated unfavourably, those who are not of the medical profession almost always fall into many mistakes. They very generally have no notion of the danger of the disease for which they are prescribed; in many cases they are not aware, and when told will hardly believe, that they or their friends have got such a disease: they suppose many remedies to be highly dangerous, or at least severe, which are not so in the least, with the same unthinking confidence that they believe many circumstances in their common way of life to be perfectly safe, which every Physician knows to be highly dangerous. A blooming girl of eighteen can conceive no danger in a slight cough, and a still slighter pain in her side; which a Physician may almost certainly know to be the first symptoms or threatenings of a consumption, that in spite of every effort of medical skill will probably be fatal in less than a twelvemonth. A blister or a bleeding proposed by a Physician in such a case, especially if the patient fainted on bleeding, would be regarded by her, and perhaps by her mother also, as very rough and cruel, if not even dangerous practice: and very probably, instead of following such rational and safe advice, Miss, with her Mamma's approbation, would go to a ball, and dance from midnight till eight in the morning; never once dreaming that she was dancing into her coffin. A guzzling Alderman, on the verge of apoplexy, would be terrified at the proposal of a large bleeding, or even of a good purge, and would think himself in the most imminent danger of being starved to death, if he were advised to content himself with little more than double the quantity of nourishment that is found sufficient to support a sturdy ploughman in health and strength. But such an Alderman can conceive no danger in a good dinner, and a bottle of wine after it; which every Physician might know to be so dangerous to him, that before his dinner could be half digested, or even his bottle

bottle of wine finished, the worthy magistrate probably might be in another world.

(22.). *Without a new institution to support, they receive the fees of the numerous pupils.* This passage deserves peculiar attention and praise, for there is something very remarkable and meritorious in it. It is literally true. Perhaps there may be a few more passages in Mr John Bell's Answer to me that have the same kind of merit, or at least some degree of it; but *apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*. Those *truifms*, if there be any such in his pamphlet, are so lost in the blaze of his splendid poetical and rhetorical fictions, that I cannot discover them; else I should have had great pleasure in pointing them out, and acknowledging the justness and severity of them all, as I do of that one at present under review. That deadly sin of pocketing our fees is indeed the sin that most easily besets us; none of us are free from it, or ever were supposed to be so. Many good and wise men consider it as absolutely essential to the notion of a Physician; just as extension in one dimension is essential to a line, in two to a surface, in three to a solid. Certain it is, that though many a Physician may be found without a head, or brains, or heart, or bowels, no Physician was ever yet known that did not take his fees. If such a monster should appear on the face of the earth, of which I trust there is little danger, he would not be permitted to live; for all his brethren would insist on prescribing for him, even without a fee. As to the receiving of fees from students who attend the clinical lectures, I myself have been a most miserable sinner; having received to my own share near L. 3000 in that way, all which I pocketed without remorse; never once suspecting that it was the price of blood, and even finding much pleasure in the thought, that the Royal Infirmary must have received within the same period of twenty-seven years at least *three times*

times as much from the same students. During the last thirteen years, I have been one of four or five Professors who took a share in the clinical lectures; but during the fourteen years preceding, I was one of two Professors who had them between us; and during the whole seven and twenty years, I am convinced not one student attended the clinical lectures without paying as much to the Infirmary as he did to the Professors. In this way I conceive that the clinical lectures always have added considerably to the funds of the House: which Mr John Bell, in the passage under review, is pleased to say they do not; and gives his reason in these words: “ *Since those pupils pay to the Infirmary no more than the “ ordinary fees.”* This is true; but the inference from it is erroneous: for every year many pupils take tickets for the Infirmary, purely on account of the clinical lectures: many for this reason take tickets two or three years, who but for the clinical lectures would have attended the Infirmary only one year, or perhaps would not have attended it at all; as having seen abundance of hospital practice before they came to Edinburgh. I should guess it would be the same to the funds of the Hospital, whether the money that comes to them proceed from a certain number of students paying a double fee, or from double the number of students paying the common fee to the Infirmary; and the latter mode is infinitely better for the students and for the public.

(23) *They (the Clinical Professors) have possession of wards larger and better appointed than those allotted to our surgical department.* Something of the same kind is stated (No. 7.) in these words: “ *You “ allotted them also wards superior in every respect to those of the Surgeons.”* From these considerations having been stated so strongly, and repeatedly, we may infer, that Mr John Bell and his clients thought them of great importance, and that they wished peculiarly to stake their veracity on the truth of what they asserted. But their usual bad luck with respect to matters of fact has attended

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ed them even on this point. As to the superiority and better appointment of the clinical wards, when compared with those of the Surgeons, I know nothing of it; and cannot even guess what is meant by it, unless it be something inconsistent with the more important proposition asserted, namely, the clinical being larger than the Surgeons wards. The clinical are in fact much smaller than the Surgeons wards: and as each of them has, at each of its four corners, like the other wards in the Hospital, a room capable of holding conveniently two beds, those private rooms necessarily bear a greater proportion to the whole of the clinical wards, than can take place in the larger wards of this Infirmary. As to the important assertion, that the clinical are larger than the Surgeons wards, it is wonderful how any individual, or any set of men, should have staked their veracity on such a point. The clinical wards contain, without crowding, two and thirty beds; one half of which are in the private rooms already mentioned: but one of those rooms in the mens ward, and one bed in the womens ward, must be deducted for the accommodation of the two nurses: there remain, then, without crowding, nine and twenty beds for patients. The largest of the Surgeons wards for men contains, without crowding, twenty-eight beds; the smallest of their mens wards, being exactly of the same size with one of the clinical wards, and bounded by the same walls, which are carried from the foundation to the roof of the Hospital, contains sixteen beds: one room capable of containing two beds, must be deducted from each ward for the accommodation of the nurses; but without crowding, those two wards can accommodate forty men patients. The Surgeons ward for women contains nineteen beds; one of which being deducted for the use of the nurse, there will remain eighteen beds for patients. This number added to forty makes fifty-eight; so that on the whole, to the best of my arithmetic, the Surgeons wards, far from being smaller than the clinical, are just *twice as large*. The smaller of the

two mens wards, which the Surgeons have at present, they got within these twenty years : but even the other two great wards, one for men and the other for women, which they have had ever since their patients were separated from those of the Physicians, are larger than the clinical wards, in the proportion of *three to two*. But, for the satisfaction and the honour of Mr John Bell and his clients, in whose assertion there certainly can be no *mistake*, I think all those very interesting and difficult arithmetical questions should be referred to a professed accountant.

Out of many passages in the section of Mr John Bell's pamphlet at present under review, which are evidently intended to excite indignation and horror against the Clinical Professors and their practice, I shall select a few of the most splendid, and such as may be dismissed with a very short commentary. By way of contrast to the frequent and multitudinous consultations of Surgeons, on which I had taken the liberty to make a few dry remarks in my former Memorial, Mr John Bell tells us, (N^o 29.), *but in the clinical ward the Physician in attendance is always alone, and unassisted; his office is indeed of such a nature as will not allow of advice or assistance*. It is very true that the Professors visit their patients in the clinical wards, and prescribe for them, unassisted and unattended by any other Physician; just as the ordinary Physicians of this and every other hospital visit their hospital-patients, and as all Physicians do with their patients in private practice, in at least nineteen cases out of twenty. Surely no person, however affluent his circumstances might be, would choose to be plagued with a consultation of Physicians, unless on the supposition of there being some peculiar doubt, or difficulty, or danger, in his case : for no man in his right wits would ever think of intrusting his health or life to a Physician whom he did not believe to have at least competent knowledge of his profession. To the best of my knowledge, by far the greater number of consultations of our Faculty are called at the request or suggestion of the Physician who first had the
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care of the patient, and found his case peculiarly difficult and dangerous. The situation of patients in the clinical wards is certainly *not worse*, in any respect, than that of the same patients would be, if they were visited and prescribed for by the same Physician singly, in their own houses; which I presume most of them would consider as a very great happiness. But in truth their situation is *better* in those wards than very probably it would be if they were visited by the same Physician in their own houses, not only in respect of proper accommodation, care, diet, and medicines, but even in respect of the attention and medical skill of the Physician; whose office of Clinical Professor necessarily obliges him to the utmost efforts of his attention, in studying their cases, and applying remedies to their diseases. It is difficult to conceive what Mr John Bell means by saying, that the Clinical Professor's *office is indeed of such a nature as will not allow of advice or assistance*. He certainly may receive, and often does receive, advice and assistance, from his professional brethren, in the treatment of his clinical patients, just as easily and effectually as he or any other Physician can do, with respect to his patients in private practice. There is even peculiar facility in getting that assistance, from the opportunities which occur every day, by the ordinary Physicians of the Hospital and the Clinical Professors visiting their respective wards at the same time. I never took the trouble to ask my colleagues, and never chanced to hear, how they managed this matter; but I know well how easily I managed it myself. In cases of doubt or difficulty, I have often got the late Dr John Hope, and Dr Hamilton, the ordinary Physicians of the Hospital, during the first twelve years of my attendance as Clinical Professor, and even Dr Rutherford, (though I had been accustomed to attend in the Infirmary more than a dozen years before he came into it as one of the ordinary Physicians) to visit my patients in the clinical wards along with me, and to give me their opinion

and advice with respect to their cases. These consultations, for a very obvious reason, were almost always either just before or just after my regular public visit; and very often were in the presence of ten, twenty, or fifty, of the students; so that they must have been generally known, and indeed were never meant to be concealed. Still oftener I have consulted with those Physicians, and with Dr Cullen, by telling them the circumstances of the cases of my Hospital-patients, and my doubts and difficulties, without giving them the trouble to visit my patients. In some cases of peculiar anatomical nicety and difficulty, I have consulted with Dr Monro about my clinical patients; and in many cases, as Mr John Bell and his clients might have known, I have had a consultation about them with the attending surgeon, and sometimes with several of the surgeons.

Whatever exceptions Mr John Bell and his clients may take at the colour of my coat, the cut of my face, or the length of my legs, I presume they will admit, that I am at least as apt to take my own way, as most Physicians who have practised in the Royal Infirmary, or any where else: and therefore, what I was accustomed to do, for the most obvious reasons of duty and expediency, I must presume, till I have evidence of the contrary, that my colleagues do on similar occasions. I do not mean to say, that it ever was my practice, or that it is or ought to be theirs, to have recourse to such consultations in every case of great and urgent danger, or even in every case that proved difficult or impossible to cure. It was chiefly in cases of doubt and difficulty with respect to the nature of the disease, that I was anxious to have such consultations. In a vast proportion of unfavourable cases there is no difficulty in knowing the nature of the disease, no doubt about what remedies ought to be tried to give the patient his best or only chance for recovery, and no doubt that that chance must be very small, even though all the most approved remedies should
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be tried in fucceffion : and as to cafes of very urgent danger, in which there yet may be great hopes from the speedy and vigorous ufe of fome powerful remedies, there is juft as little need of a confultation to tell a Phyfician of competent judgment and knowledge what he ought to do. If a Phyfician fhould prefume to praftife in the Clinical, or in any other wards of this Hofpital, or in any hofpital, without knowing what were the powerful remedies which ought to be employed in the moft urgent cafes, his fituation no doubt would be very embarrassing ; and that of his patients ftill more fo. But of fuch embarrassment I conceive there is little danger. The number of powerful remedies, which have a direct, or what is called a fpecific power in curing certain difeafes, is very fmall : infinitely fmall than is generally believed. The late Dr HEBERDEN of London, one of the moft learned and eminent, and what is more to the purpofe, one of the moft judicious and candid Phyficians that ever lived, after a long life fpent in the praftice of phyfic, declared, that he fcarce knew any fuch remedies, except quickfilver for the pox, brimftone for the itch, Peruvian bark for agues, opium for certain convulfions, and Bath water for the crop-ficknefs of drunkards. He mentions feveral other pretended fpecific remedies, but very honeftly and wifely expreffes his diftruft of them ; and his doubts whether, befides thofe five, (the laft two of which, however valuable they may be as remedies, ought to be deducted from the number of fpecifics), there be ten others of fuch great and almoft certain efficacy. I am forry to fay, that I do not know quite fo many ; nay not even one fuch, befides the few juft mentioned. Of thofe few remedies, and of the difeafes which may almoft certainly be cured by them, and of the proper mode of adminiftering the remedies, no Phyfician can be fuppofed ignorant. For want of fuch fpecific remedies, the greater, and by far the moft important part of our praftice, confifts in employing remedies of *great* and *general* efficacy ; fuch

as bleeding, vomits, purges, and other evacuations; or stimulants, such as wine; or sedatives and anodynes, such as opium; according to the various circumstances of *many different* diseases. Of such remedies, and their general effects on the body, and consequently of their important and salutary operation in various circumstances of disease, no Physician can be supposed ignorant even from the first; and his knowledge of those things must increase every day of his practice. It is possible, however, that a Physician, especially a young one, who knows perfectly all these things, may yet, from a very natural diffidence and timidity, be unwilling to rely on his own judgment, either in those cases which he considers as hopeless, or in those in which he expects great benefit from the use of violent but dangerous remedies. A few consultations with his elder and more experienced brethren, if his nerves be not incurably weak, will soon put him pretty much at ease, in such cases, by letting him see clearly what physic *can*, and what it *cannot* do. It is true, that in such cases, in private practice, consultations are every day called: but this is not so much for the benefit of the patient, as for the security of the first Physician himself in point of fame and fortune; and also to prevent painful reflections in the friends and relations of the patient, who, if the case had been trusted entirely to one Physician, and had ended fatally, might have imputed the death of their friend to the unskilfulness, the timidity, or the rashness of that one Physician. But this kind of precaution never was, and never will be thought necessary in hospital-practice; and a Physician who constantly required consultations to determine what was to be done in the plainest cases of urgent danger, or to assure him that nothing could be done to any good purpose, in cases evidently hopeless, would be laughed at and despised for his affectation and folly, instead of getting credit for his great modesty, and extraordinary anxiety about his patients. If any of the Clinical Professors have

not availed themselves of the advice and assistance of their professional brethren, when they had, or thought they had, occasion for it, it must have been entirely their own fault, and not in the least the fault of the institution of clinical lectures in this Hospital; which, far from making such consultations difficult or impossible, makes them peculiarly easy, and gives opportunities for them every day.

(26.) *At one time fevers, at another palsies, at another time hydropgies or convulsions; are in request.* At all times a great variety of diseases, and even the greatest variety that can be got, must be in request among the Clinical Professors; for the most obvious reasons in the world. Such a variety is most interesting and most instructive to the students, and affords the Professors the best materials for their lectures. But surely no injury can be done to the patients by that selection; who never were even supposed to get fevers or palsies, dropgies or convulsions, for the benefit or the amusement of the Clinical Professors, and their pupils; but having got such diseases, were received into the Hospital for their own benefit, and being received into it, could have no objections to be laid in the clinical wards, instead of the common large wards of the Hospital; nor any objections to being under the care of Physicians who were Professors in the University, and were obliged to give a minute account of their practice on their hospital-patients, instead of being under the care of Physicians who were not Professors, and under no such obligation to give an account of their practice.

(N^o 24.) *Without their purpose being observed, they can go into the waiting-room, and mark out the most dangerous diseases as the subjects of their practice.* In this I can see no harm at all; and certainly no harm to the patients. It certainly does not make the diseases more dangerous than they were before. The only possible danger is to the Professors themselves, the result of whose practice in
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the clinical wards, if compared with that of the ordinary Physicians in the common wards of the Hospital, might appear to the ignorant, and be represented by the malevolent, in a light very unfavourable to the Professors. My rule in choosing patients for the clinical wards, and I presume the other Professors have followed nearly the same, has always been, to take acute cases, (fevers, inflammations, &c.), in preference to chronic cases, (palsies, dropsies, convulsions, &c.): and of the chronic cases, to take always the *worst*, and most urgently dangerous, in preference to the slighter and less dangerous. My wish was to have *aut mors cita, aut victoria laeta*. But when such a choice is made of patients for the clinical wards, it *must necessarily* happen, that a much greater proportion of the patients in them, than of those in the Hospital in general, shall die under cure. To suppose otherwise, would be not only to suppose the Clinical Professors much better practitioners than the ordinary Physicians of the Hospital, which is abundantly absurd; but further, to suppose also, that the ordinary Physicians were so stupid and so obstinate, as either to be incapable of improving, or determined not to improve, by the more successful practice of their brethren: for any particular remedy, or mode of practice, employed with extraordinary success by the Clinical Professors, must soon become known to the ordinary Physicians; who, for their own sake, as well as that of their patients, would be obliged to employ it.

The average proportion of deaths in the Hospital in general, has hardly ever been less than four, or more than five in the hundred, of all the patients admitted into it. I do not know exactly what the average has been in the clinical wards: but I judge it has been at least six or seven, perhaps eight, in the hundred; admitting however of great variations, according to the season, the weather, and the prevailing epidemics. I know well the two extreme cases in my own experience: in spring 1779, when the weather, in February,

bruary, March, and April, was as mild as it commonly is in summer, I lost but one patient out of seventy : a few years afterwards, in three months of very severe winter-weather, I lost twenty out of a hundred and twenty. The latter was four times the usual proportion of the Hospital, the former but the third part of the usual average. Any person, in the least acquainted with the subject, will judge at once which of those two courses of clinical lectures was the better. It was sometimes said, whether with strict truth or not I never took the trouble to enquire, that, during my attendance as Clinical Professor, no Physician's patient died in the Hospital, but those under my care. If this were literally and universally true, whenever the clinical wards are open, there would be no harm in it to any body : it could only happen from all the patients who were to die being taken into those wards ; and it must be the same to them whether they die in one ward or in another of the Hospital. To impute the deaths in the clinical wards as a matter of blame to the Professors, whether on the score of ignorance, negligence, or the trying of dangerous experiments on the patients, waving all thoughts of the illiberality and injustice of it, would be as absurd as it would be to suppose the ordinary Physicians, just at that time, and only at that time, endowed with the miraculous gift of curing, or at least of keeping alive, all their Hospital patients ; and to give them great praise for that extraordinary though temporary qualification. No person of candour and common sense will ever think a Physician responsible for the death of his patients ; it is only for the neglect or mismanagement of them that he can justly be blamed.

If a Clinical Professor, in the course of his attendance in the Hospital, should decline taking his equal share with the ordinary Physicians of those very dangerous cases, of which a large proportion must be expected to end unfavourably, I should think he acted very disingenuously with respect to his pupils, and illiberally with respect

to the ordinary Physicians of the Hospital. His conduct would certainly, and most justly, be regarded as a vile piece of quackery, intended to impose on his pupils, by making them believe that he was much more skilful and successful in his practice than the ordinary Physicians: but I presume such an attempt could not succeed, and would soon be reprobated with honest indignation.

When I mention thus freely the receiving, whether into the clinical or the common wards of the Hospital, patients who must be expected to die in it very soon, it must not be thought that I am either ignorant or regardless of the original institution of this Infirmary, and of that clause in the charter of it which seems to forbid the receiving of any patients into it that could not be cured. This surely could not be meant, and it never was understood, strictly and literally, as implying that the Physicians, on admitting a patient, *ipso facto*, undertook with confidence to cure him. The meaning of the institution to which I allude was no more, but that this Infirmary was not to be made a receptacle or hospital of incurables, to the exclusion of the sick poor who might be cured if they were admitted into it. In this sense, the regulation in question is undoubtedly proper, as a general direction; though sometimes there must be deviations from it, in favour of some miserable objects, who, if not admitted into the Hospital, would soon perish in the streets; but who, when received into the Hospital, obtain, for a few days, or perhaps a few weeks, every relief and comfort which their calamitous situation requires, or can admit of. Even if this kind of deviation from the general principle were condemned and prohibited, the number of deaths in the Hospital would not be much lessened. In general, it is impossible to know at first whether a disease is absolutely incurable, or till some at least of the remedies, usually most successful in such a disease, have been fairly tried: and in the course of such trials, many patients must certainly die. A Physician must be very young and inexperienced

inexperienced indeed, if not something worse, who does not know, that many cases which appeared slight, and very favourable, have yet baffled all the powers of medicine, and proved either soon fatal, or permanently incurable: and that many cases which at first appeared extremely dangerous, and almost hopeless, nay, which for some time had baffled the skill of Physicians and several powerful medicines, have yet yielded to other remedies, and been at last completely cured. In these respects, the practice of physic is just on the same footing with that of the noble profession of the law. A young lawyer, if he is much of a coxcomb, which is said to be sometimes the case, will be ready to pronounce with confidence, that some untried causes are certainly good, and others as certainly bad and hopeless: but by the time he has been a few years at the bar, and has lost two or three dozen of causes which he thought good, and won nearly as many which he thought bad, he learns to think, if not with more diffidence of his own judgment, at least with more respect for the judgment of others, and with due reverence for the decisions of a court of justice.

(No. 25.) *Sometimes when patients having uncommon diseases are received by the ordinary Physicians, they are reclaimed by the Clinical Professors, the rightful lords of the manor! This fact is absolutely new to me, though I have known the clinical wards for more than thirty years: and as Mr John Bell and his clients have been so generally unfortunate with respect to the numerous facts which they have asserted as confidently as this one, I strongly suspect that they have not been more lucky than usual in this instance. I do not, however, presume to contradict it positively, or to prove the direct contrary of it, as I have done with respect to many others of their facts; or to show that it is impossible. I humbly leave it to them to prove it if they can. I acknowledge it to be possible that a Clinical Professor should act in a manner disgraceful to himself,*

brutal with respect to the patients, and illiberal and insolent with respect to the ordinary Physicians; just as it is *possible* for a Clinical Professor to run mad, or to get drunk, and in that situation to go to the Hospital and expose himself. But I am sure no Clinical Professors could behave in the manner expressed by Mr John Bell, on the principle which he has specified, as *rightful Lords of the manor*; for they are not such Lords: on the contrary, they know, and I thought every person acquainted with the Hospital had known, that they attend in it by the express permission of the Managers, who first allowed them *ten*, then *fifteen*, then *twenty* patients, for their establishment; and who are unquestionably entitled, whenever they see cause for so doing, to reduce the number of their patients to fifteen, or to ten, or to shut up the clinical wards altogether, or allot them to the ordinary Physicians of the house, and forbid any Medical Professor ever to enter it. The point in question is not new or imaginary. For many years the Managers permitted in the Hospital a lying-in ward, under the care of the Professor of Midwifery: but having learned by much experience, that this was an improper institution, they very wisely abolished it. I have no doubt they would do, as they certainly ought to do, the same with respect to the clinical wards, if ever they heard of the Clinical Professors behaving brutally towards the patients, or insolently towards the ordinary Physicians. I can say with confidence, that I never heard of any of my colleagues behaving in that manner; and that I never did or thought of doing so myself, during all my long attendance as Clinical Professor. I always considered the circumstance of a patient being taken into the common medical wards, under the care of the ordinary Physician, as an insurmountable bar to my getting him into the clinical ward, unless the Physician under whose care he was recommended him to me as a proper patient; which the ordinary Physicians have often done in the most liberal and obliging manner; and unless the *patient himself* was willing to
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come under my care, which has not always been the case on such occasions. I suspect (but this must be understood with a *salvo jure* to Mr John Bell and his clients, who are well entitled to prove, if they can, their own fact) that his account of the conduct of the Clinical Professors, which to me appears so new and marvellous, is only a rhetorical embellishment of what may be seen every day on the *admission-list*, which is always signed by one or other of the ordinary Physicians, never by the Clinical Professors. In that list, which is the warrant to the matron of the Infirmary to put on the establishment, and provide with food and beds, the patients whose names are found in it, there is a column for the purpose of marking what wards of the Hospital the several patients are to be sent to, as soldiers, sailors, servants, clinical, or medical ordinary. If the Clinical Professor or his clerk get the start of the ordinary Physician and his clerk, in the waiting-room, the patients whom he selects are marked originally in the admission-list as *clinical* : but if the ordinary Physician has the start of the Professor, all the *medical* patients are marked originally in the list as for the *medical ordinary* ; and then, after the Clinical Professor has made choice of the patients proper for his wards, the admission-list is amended, by erasing the words *medical ordinary* after the names of those patients, and writing *clinical* in their stead : but the patients from the first are taken under the care of the Clinical Professor.

(N^o 30.) *The first Physician comes out in November, fills his wards, assort his diseases, writes notes and regular reports of his patients complaints ; completes his experiments, lectures on their cases ; and then empties these wards, by delivering his patients over to the ordinary Physicians, or by actually dismissing them from the house.* Every Clinical Professor (I believe) makes it a rule to take in very few new patients for some time before he ceases to attend in the clinical wards ; so that, when his time is expired, he may not leave any great number of patients whom it might be inconvenient to his successor

cessor to keep in those wards, or to the ordinary Physicians to receive at once into theirs. This, which cannot be done in the common wards, either medical or surgical, *Patet omnibus*, being the fundamental rule and well-known motto of this Infirmary, is easily accomplished in the clinical wards, by taking in, during the few last weeks of the Professor's attendance, only acute cases, or some of the most urgent of the chronic. But when it happens that there are in the clinical wards patients labouring under obstinate chronic diseases, who are so uncivil that they will neither die nor recover, such patients as Dr Cullen used emphatically to call the *stick-fasts* of a clinical ward, in plain common sense, the best thing that can be done for them, is to commit them to the care of another Physician. This is giving them every chance for recovery; and it is even positively enjoined by the rules of the Infirmary, with respect to the patients of the ordinary Physicians. And as to the convalescents, who must occasionally be left by a Clinical Professor in the Hospital, it is hardly conceivable that they should suffer any injury by going under the care of another Physician.

(11.) *It is unquestionably true, that the teaching and demonstrating by experiment the best and most approved practice, must be upon the whole advantageous to the sick; yet the making professed trial of every practice is not so! it is only on the presumption of general good, that, in this instance, experiments, which must be a partial evil, are allowed. Innuendo, that the Clinical Professors, not content with teaching and showing practically on the patients the best practice and its good effects, have been accustomed to make trial of every practice; which certainly could not be advantageous to the sick; but that this partial evil with respect to them, that is to say, an evil which must have been hurtful to many and even fatal to some individuals, was allowed, on the presumption that ultimately it would produce some general good.*

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No person in the least acquainted either with the history or with the present state of the practice of physic, can ever give credit to such an insinuation. Far from believing that the Clinical Professors have been accustomed to try *every practice* on their Hospital patients, I do not believe that all of them put together, in the course of more than fifty years, that the Medical Clinical Lectures have now been continued, have ever tried even the fiftieth part of the various practices, including of course the different medicines, that have been proposed, and even strongly recommended as successful, by Physicians, from the days of Hippocrates to the present time. I doubt much whether all of them put together have tried even the fiftieth part of the medicines which have been recommended in their own time, and actually employed by their own countrymen, by virtue of his Majesty's Royal Letters Patent, and newspaper advertisements, and strong testimonials from numberless individuals in all stations of life, who declared, and even swore most solemnly, that they, or their friends, or families, had been cured by those very medicines. I am sure at least that no Clinical Professor ever could suppose that he had any permission from the Managers, or any right, by virtue of his own profession and station, to make such trials of *every practice*: I am sure also that any Professor who should have attempted to make such trials of every practice, on the supposition that all of them might be good and useful, must almost instantly have become an object of contempt and derision to his own pupils: and I have no doubt that the fatal consequences which must often have resulted from such trials of *every practice*, would soon have made such a Professor an object of indignation and horror to his pupils and to the public. As a vast number of practices, which at different times have been recommended in physic, are absolutely inconsistent with one another, no Physician can be so foolish, or so ignorant, as to suppose that all of them could be useful, or even safe. To employ all of them, at the same time, on the same patients

tients, or even such a number of them as could be employed, whether inconsistent or not, would be ample evidence of insanity in any Physician; and to employ those which had long been exploded as useless, or reprobated as pernicious, omitting those which have generally, and most recently, been esteemed the most successful, implying necessarily the death of many of the patients treated in such a manner, would be downright murder, even though some remote general good were expected from it. But it is evident that no such good ever could result from that kind of practice; for which there could be no justification, no excuse, and no reason whatever.

The same considerations are applicable, in their full force, to what Mr John Bell has said, (2). That *it becomes the duty of the Medical Professor to teach practically, not only the genuine practice, but the various theories of medicine.* The Professor may teach, and certainly ought to teach, by his practice in the clinical wards, the best practice that he is acquainted with: and when he also gives, as he ought to do in his lectures, his reasons for that practice, or the theory of it, if the result, on trial, corresponds to his theory, by a kind of licence of speech strangely illogical, but not quite unintelligible, he may be said to teach practically the genuine or just theory of physic. But that a Professor should teach practically the *various theories* of physic, is impossible in point of fact, as well as illogical in point of expression. Supposing a Professor so mad, or so unprincipled, as to attempt, for the amusement of his pupils, to practise according to the various theories of medicine, nineteen in twenty of which he *must* know to be false, the result of his practice *must* not only be destruction to his patients, but *ipso facto* a refutation of those theories, which, according to Mr John Bell's account of the matter, it is the Professor's duty to teach.

The same consideration is a sufficient answer to what Mr John Bell has said, (32.), of the clinical department of this Infirmary.

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It is the school, too, where the Physician not only practises on his fellow-creatures, but instructs, at once, hundreds of young men, and extends the errors or benefits of his own practice to distant times and countries. This is impossible, I mean with respect to his *errors*; and one of the many great advantages of clinical lectures is, that a Professor, though deceived himself, and unreasonably partial to certain theories and practices, cannot deceive his pupils, as in his general systematic lectures on the theory and practice of physic he may easily do. A student must be either culpably negligent, or incorrigibly stupid, who does not see what practices employed by the Professor are successful, and what are useless or pernicious. It must be entirely his own fault, and surely a very great fault, if he follows any such useless or pernicious practices.

As both the theory and practice of physic are notoriously very imperfect, it is not to be expected, that the Clinical Professors, any more than that the ordinary Physicians of an hospital, or other Physicians in their daily private practice, shall always agree, either in their practice, or in their theory. But every such difference of opinion or practice must strongly excite the curiosity and attention of their pupils, and even give them the fairest opportunities of judging for themselves what are the best of the different practices which they see employed, and what evidence there is of the different theories which they hear most keenly maintained. On many of the most important points both of theory and practice, the students can find no difference among the Professors: and they will probably find but little difference among them with respect to those *general* principles, on which we judge of the degree of credit that should be given to the recommendations of any practice, or any remedy, whether new or old; and consequently of the expediency of trying it in any disease for which we are sensible that we have no effectual remedy, as is often the case, or in which the practice generally found successful has failed.

Physicians, who have any share of common sense and knowledge of their profession, must always distrust those practices, and those medicines, which are most strongly recommended as universally and infallibly successful in particular diseases. Not only almost universal experience hath shown that such encomiums are false, and founded on credulity, ignorance, or knavery; but any competent knowledge of the structure and functions of the human body, and of the nature, the progress, the seat, and the causes of many diseases, must convince them that there *cannot be* such infallible virtues in the remedies or practices recommended. But when the remedies so confidently recommended are kept as secrets, for the profit of a few individuals, that kind of distrust, not only among the regular faculty, but among all men of sense, is still more strongly established: the temptations to fraud and falsehood in these cases are so great, and the turpitude of those who have a pecuniary interest in the fame of their drugs is so glaring, that truth cannot be expected from them.

Any medicine or any practice notoriously introduced in consequence of superstition, must always be distrusted by those of our faculty who are themselves not under the dominion of that superstition: though it cannot be denied that some such medicines or practices, by their influence on the imagination, or by the great faith of the patients on whom they were employed, may now and then have had powerful and salutary effects. But this mode of operation of any practices or medicines is so precarious, that no Physician in his senses will ever risk the lives of his patients, and at the same time his own reputation for understanding and professional knowledge, by trusting to them, to the exclusion of remedies of more general and certain efficacy.

Lastly, Any medicine or mode of practice notoriously introduced in consequence of bad reasoning, and false, or at best conjectural, notions of the nature and cause of a disease, must always be distrust-

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ed by those of the regular faculty, who perceive the badness of the reasoning, and are aware of the uncertainty, or perhaps the error of the notions that led to the use of them. Even the strong testimonials and recommendations which are almost always given in favour of every new practice and medicine, are not sufficient to remove that distrust on the part of a Physician, who knows how generally such testimonials have proceeded from some kind of infatuation, and honest deception, not only in those who introduced the new remedies, and who might therefore be thought blindly partial to them, but in those who adopted them, and in those on whom they were employed, and who *bona fide* believed that they had been cured by them.

Yet even that irresistible distrust does not always hinder, nor ought it to hinder, Physicians from trying many of the new remedies so recommended. There are many very common and deplorable diseases, for which we have certainly no remedy; though perhaps we have plenty of drugs, and various modes of practice, which have been said to cure them. There are some diseases for which we have remedies that very generally cure them; which remedies however have often very disagreeable, sometimes distressful or even dangerous effects. A Physician is not only justifiable in trying, but would hardly be justifiable if he did not try, some of the new remedies from time to time recommended in those diseases.

Within these twenty years a preparation of a mineral substance, called *Baryta*, or Terra ponderosa, was strongly recommended by an ingenious and respectable Physician, the late Dr ADAIR CRAWFORD, as a powerful remedy for the King's Evil; a disease, in one form or another, perhaps the most general, the most distressing, and (including its effects when it falls on the lungs and produces consumption) the most *fatal* that we have in this country. I have no doubt that in Great Britain and Ireland 30,000 people, perhaps

double this number, every year die of the King's Evil in one form or another. For this deplorable disease at that time we had, and, with sorrow I must say, at this hour we have, *positively no cure*. Dr Adair Crawford's reasoning, which led him to try the *Baryta*, and the supposed analogy of the pretended good effects of sea-water, were altogether unsatisfactory: but his recommendations of it were very strong, as having been found experimentally successful, and were soon confirmed by at least as strong testimonials from many other Physicians. The substance in question was said to be so active, as to have been employed with good success, instead of arsenic, to poison rats. It was therefore necessary to use it with caution. It has been used accordingly ever since with due caution by many practitioners; probably by some hundreds of us. I believe I myself have given it to some hundreds, and probably many other practitioners have given it to much greater numbers of patients. The result of all this practice, or of many *thousands* of experiments with it, is a mass of irreconcilable contradictions. That *many* patients, though *few* in proportion to the whole number who got it, have recovered while using it, is most certain: just as happened formerly to many of those who had the same disease before the *Baryta* was introduced into practice; and as hath happened more lately to many patients ill of the King's Evil, who did not get that medicine: But the difficult questions remain, Did those patients recover in consequence of it? Did it cure them? or, Were they in any respect the better for it? The result of my own experiments and observations with respect to it strongly is, that it is a remedy just of the same value with the Royal Touch.

Within these five years, an herb, called *Digitalis*, or Foxglove, was strongly recommended as a cure for consumptions; and has been fairly tried in this disease, I presume by some hundreds of practitioners. I know that I myself, within these four years, have prescribed, or concurred in consultation with other Physicians in prescribing it, to more than 120 consumptive patients. The general

neral *efficacy* of the medicine was well known: it was known to be so *powerful*, that a dose of it, not larger than a common pinch of snuff, might disorder most violently, or very probably kill, a strong man. Yet the foxglove had been much used for near twenty years before, as a remedy for dropfy, in many cases of which it had proved really very useful. Physicians had also learned, from its effects on their dropfical patients, I believe at first to their great astonishment, that the foxglove lessened very remarkably the quickness of the pulse, bringing it down sometimes from 120, or 140, to 80, 60, or sometimes even to 40, or 30, in a minute. This effect of it certainly promised to do good in consumptions, in which great quickness of the pulse, as part of the hectic fever, is one of the worst symptoms: it seemed even possible, that by that mode of operation it might greatly lessen, or stop altogether, the inflammation and bad suppuration in the lungs, and so allow the ulcers in them to heal. In a disease for which we had no remedy; which, in spite of all our efforts employed from the hour when the beginning of it is first observed, proves fatal to three patients out of four; and which, in its advanced or confirmed state, is fatal in at least nineteen cases out of twenty; there could be no scruple about employing a remedy so strongly recommended, as having been found practically useful; especially as the mode of administering with safety that active and dangerous medicine was by that time very generally known. So to work we went, with great diligence, to try the Foxglove on a large proportion of our consumptive patients: some of whom grew better for some time, and a few of whom, I fear very few indeed, have recovered, to all appearance completely and permanently: just as used to happen, and has continued to happen, to a few of the many consumptive patients who never got one particle of Foxglove. It still remains *doubtful*, whether, in any circumstances of consumption, that boasted medicine has done any great or permanent

ment good: but to me it seems probable, that in a few cases it has really been of service; and of course that in the same, or very similar circumstances, it may hereafter be used occasionally with some advantage; just as many other medicines may be, and actually have been. But most of us, I presume, have already seen more than enough of its administration to convince us, that it is *not a cure* for consumption; that very often it does no good, and sometimes positively does harm, by the great weakness, sickness, and oppression, that it produces; so as to make it necessary to desist from the use of it, even in some cases in which it had greatly lessened the quickness of the pulse.

Though the trials made with those two new medicines proved unsuccessful, I should think it illiberal and unjust to blame me, or any Physician, for trying them. But if all such trials were deliberately condemned, as wrong at least, if not criminal, certainly they never could be regarded as any peculiar wrong or crime with respect to the patients in the clinical wards of this Hospital, or as proceeding, in the smallest degree, from any permission, real or pretended, given by the Managers to the Professors, to try *every practice*, and all kinds of experiments, on those unhappy patients, for *the general interests of science*. Probably all of us, and certainly I at least, used or tried both those medicines in the diseases which they were said to cure, in private practice, before we used them in the clinical wards, and have used them twenty or forty times more in private practice than in the Hospital.

With equal frankness I shall mention two other very celebrated new remedies, for the *not trying* of which I know I have been more blamed by my own pupils and others, than ever I was for all the remedies, new or old, that I have tried in the course of my life. One of these was another boasted cure for consumption, recommended about ten or twelve years ago; namely, the breathing, instead of pure air, what might be called (at least comparatively)

tively) foul or tainted air; that is, common air mixed with a certain proportion of some kinds of air, (*gases*), which by themselves are unfit for the purpose of breathing. The reasoning that led to this curious practice was abundantly ingenious, but to me appeared as flimsy, and as slenderly supported, as any that we have in physic. Nor was this the worst of it: for supposing the theory of consumption, and of hectic especially, which was given as a reason for the practice recommended, and the corresponding theory of the sea-scurvy, to be perfectly true, the most obvious practical inference from them was, that, to cure a consumption, nothing more could be wanted but just to put the patient on the common sea-faring diet, only taking care not to continue it too long, lest he should get the scurvy instead of his consumption. That very diet, which almost certainly would give a healthy person the scurvy in three or four months, ought just as certainly to have cured a consumption in one or two months. This inference had not altogether escaped the view of the ingenious author of the new theory and practice: but it does not appear that he ever chose to put his doctrine to that decisive test. For these reasons, and also because the theory as well as the practice recommended were inconsistent with what I knew of the good effects of milk and vegetable diet, and of riding on horseback in our purest country-air during our best summer-weather, (which exercise, by the by, had been at least as strongly recommended as an *almost certain cure* for consumption by Dr Sydenham, one of the most eminent Physicians that ever practised in England, as any of the new remedies have been by those who proposed them), it was impossible for me not to distrust sadly the first testimonials, strong as these of course were, in favour of the practice recommended, or to be ambitious of the honour of being the first in this country to make trial of it. But as it was still *possible* that those testimonials might be true, and that the practice might prove a valuable addition to
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the art of physic, I was curious to learn how it succeeded with others: for I knew that many practitioners would be eager to try it. The *first* and the *last* piece of intelligence that I received about it, after an interval of many years, were equally edifying and decisive. The first was from one of my own pupils; who tried it with great diligence on several patients, and was delighted to find that it agreed vastly well with them all; and that all of them were much the better for it: but all of them died of their disease in a few months. This, being interpreted, means, in plain English, that he and his patients had been much amused and gratified for some time by the new practice, though this in reality did no good; the disease running its natural course, just as it would have done if no such practice had been employed. The last intelligence, or rather *no* intelligence that I got of it, within these few weeks, was from an eminent practitioner in this city, Mr Benjamin Bell, whom I chanced to ask whether he had any recent experience of the *pneumatic* practice in question. He said, he had not: but added, that very lately he had put the same question to a great London Doctor, to whom he had occasion to write about a patient, and had received for answer, that he (the London Doctor) believed something of that kind had been talked of seven or eight years ago; but that he had heard nothing of it lately.

Another new and strongly recommended practice, which I have never tried, is one mentioned in my former Memorial, (page 227.): I mean the use of the nitric acid, (*Aqua fortis*), properly diluted, instead of quicksilver, (properly prepared), as a cure for the fashionable distemper. It was supposed, that not the quicksilver, but something (oxygen) united with it when duly prepared for use, and separated from it in the body, was the remedy for that disease. This might be true, for aught that I knew; though the proof of it was by no means complete or satisfactory. But it was instantly coupled with another supposition, of which I could see
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neither proof nor probability, namely, that all the good effects generally obtained from the use of the common preparations of quicksilver proceeded from the oxygen, and all the bad effects of them from the metal itself. As the pure liquid quicksilver may be drunk to the amount of a pound every morning for many days, or perhaps months together, without doing either good or harm, and in fact had been drunk very freely some fourscore years ago by many hundreds of fine people in London, just because it was the fashion, I should have thought it more probable that the bad as well as the good effects of our good old medicine proceeded from the ingredient of acknowledged great activity, than from the one which seemed to be inert itself, but a convenient vehicle for introducing the other ingredient into the human body. But as these cautious speculations were disregarded, and *aqua fortis*, as containing the supposed salutary oxygen without the supposed pernicious metal, was freely used and strongly recommended as admirably successful, I was very anxious, notwithstanding my distrust of the reasoning, to get, from practitioners whom I knew, the most authentic and impartial accounts of the success of the new remedy. One of the first to whom I applied for such information was an eminent Surgeon already mentioned, Mr Benjamin Bell: and the first intelligence I got from him about it was, that he had already had several patients who were supposed and said to have been cured by it; but found to their sorrow that they were not cured, and were fain to submit to be cured by the old remedy, under his care. This discouraging information, and some similar instances that I have met with since, and some instances of distressing effects from the Nitric acid, not very unlike to some of the bad effects of Mercury, especially on the stomach and bowels, have hitherto deterred me from trusting the life, or even the nose of any patient to the new remedy. Yet I am by no means sure that it is altogether useless, even in the disease for which it has been recommended:

nor can I think a Physician blameable, if, in certain cases of that disease, he should employ it.

Yet frequent as our disappointments with respect to the virtues of new remedies, whether medicines or peculiar modes of practice, have been; and great as our indignation must be at many of our brethren, for their irrational credulity, in first allowing themselves to be deceived, and then in assisting to deceive others, by their careless observation and too confident testimonials of the efficacy of such remedies; we are not *entitled* to reject, and refuse to try, all new medicines and practices: for this would amount to a resolution not to allow the practice of physic to be improved; though we all must feel to our sorrow, that there are many frequent, severe, and dangerous diseases, for which we have no cure, and many others, in which our best practice, with the help of all the remedies most recommended in them, is but precarious, in some cases failing altogether, and in others proving but imperfectly successful.

We are not even entitled to reject, without a trial, the testimony of our brethren in favour of practices, the good effects, or mode of operation of which, we are unable to explain. Such is the imperfection of our boasted science, that the pernicious influence of some things as causes of diseases, and the salutary mode of operation of other things as remedies, are to us equally inscrutable, and perhaps will ever remain so. Yet the bare knowledge of the simple unexplained facts, that some such things are hurtful, and others of them useful, may be of infinite importance: and it is the duty of every Physician, in his practice, to avail himself of that empirical knowledge.

Of the numberless new medicines and practices, which, in the course of the last century, were introduced with the highest encomiums, two have actually been approved and established by the most ample and decisive experience, as highly salutary and important; namely, first, Inoculation for the small-pox, introduced by

LADY

LADY MARY WORTLY MONTAGUE about fourscore years ago ; and, secondly, Inoculation for the cow-pox, in order to preserve the person so inoculated from the small-pox for ever after ; a practice introduced by Dr JENNER within these five years. Both these practices were originally, and the latter of them still is, altogether empirical. The former, when first employed, was recommended entirely by the strong testimonials of its great success : the latter is so at this hour. It is a kind of reproach to our *science* : for if all the Physicians in Europe were put to the rack, they could not assign even the shadow of a reason why the cow-pox, any more than the great pox, should secure a person for ever afterwards from the small-pox. The case, I believe, is somewhat different with respect to the good effects of inoculation in making the small-pox mild and safe. We certainly know some circumstances about it which contribute to that good effect : but I doubt much whether any mode of preparation before inoculating, or any use of the cool regimen after it and during the disease, be all on which the benefit of inoculation depends. There seems to be something about it not yet explained. At any rate, for a long time after it was first used in England, the benefit of it, ascertained by experience, was not in the least explained, or accounted for, by medical science. The history of physic does not afford two other such instances, of practices, not only not recommended by any science or theory, but seemingly each of them a downright outrage on humanity and common sense. To infect a man deliberately with a loathsome disease, derived from a brute ; or wilfully to communicate to a man a very dangerous and loathsome disease, though taken from another man, in order to preserve him from the danger of the same disease, might well be called an absurd as well as a dangerous experiment : and certainly any Physicians who should have presumed to try, or to recommend, such experiments, would soon, and most deservedly, have become objects of indignation and horror to their countrymen ; if the whole tenor

of their conduct had not shewn that they acted uprightly, to the best of their judgment, for the benefit of those on whom the experiments were tried.

I can remember, that between forty and fifty years ago, when there were still many doubts and fears and keen disputes about inoculation for the small-pox, my father took care to get all his children inoculated ; partly, as I learned many years afterwards, because he knew that five of his own brothers and sisters had died of that disease ; which seemed to imply that it was peculiarly fatal, in consequence probably of some peculiarity of constitution, in his family. His conduct in getting his own children inoculated, with all of whom it succeeded perfectly, enabled him to recommend it generally and confidently ; and precluded a number of frivolous and endless disputes about it. I believe his example as well as his precepts contributed much to make the practice of inoculation almost universal at Aberdeen, where at that time he lived.

Little more than three years ago, in consequence of the strong testimonials which I had seen in favour of it, I wished to *try* the inoculation with the cow-pox. It happened that Dr TIERNY, a disciple of Dr JENNER, was at that time (spring 1800) one of my pupils, and had just received from him some cow-pox matter. The first person on whom I *tried* it, and the first person in whom I ever saw the disease, was a child of my own ; and this too at the time when his mother was nursing him. I believe I was the first Physician in Edinburgh who tried or recommended that practice ; which certainly I never could or durst have recommended to any person, if I had not employed it, when I had an opportunity, in my own family. The simple question, which, on that supposition, would have met me at once, must effectually have stopped my mouth. I soon learned that it had been practised six months before by Dr ANDERSON of Leith, with its usual complete success. Since that time it has become so common in Edinburgh, that it is no longer an object
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of alarm, nay, hardly of curiosity, even among the great mass of the people.

When Physicians, in the trials which they make of new medicines and new practices, or in declining to try such remedies, do to their patients, whether in great hospitals or in private houses, just what they do to those who are dearest to them, their patients surely have no reason to complain of them. Nay, I cannot for my heart conceive what better, or what else, they expect, or would have of us. But as Mr John Bell and his clients have been at so much pains to convince the public, that the practice of the Clinical Professors, in the wards allotted to them in this Hospital, is a *partial evil*, (that is to say, a very horrible evil to the unhappy patients who are the subjects of it), but that it is *allowed, on the presumption of general good*, especially in hopes that it will promote the *general interests of science*; it is plain, that they think there is something in it that is very bad for the individual patients on whom it is employed, and something in it which ought not to be, and would not be, allowed, were it not on the presumption of general good, and with a view to promote the general interests of science.

On that most serious point, where the health and the lives of the poor and unhappy entrusted to our care are at stake, we ought certainly, without scruple, to make use of every *friend* and every *foe*.

I should therefore humbly beg of Mr John Bell and his clients, whether friends or foes to mankind in general, and to us Clinical Professors in particular, to be a little more explicit; and to specify what mode of practice they think we ought to follow in the clinical wards, in every respect, but especially with respect to the trying of experiments, or the employing of very old or very new, of unusual or of dangerous remedies, *purely for the good of the individual patients on whom they are employed*, and without any regard to
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the general interests of science, or to any remote and *general good* whatever. For example, let them state the general principle or rule of conduct that should direct us in the treatment of patients labouring under diseases, for the cure of which respectively we have modes of practice or medicines of great and certain efficacy. Let them say what we ought to do in those diseases, (if there be any such), for each of which we have *many* certain cures : let them say what we ought to do with our patients labouring under diseases for which we have no certain cures, but in which different remedies, of great though precarious efficacy, are occasionally used with success : let them say what we ought to do in those diseases, for which we are sensible that we have no cure, but for which some new, and by us untried remedies have been strongly recommended : let them say explicitly what they would have us do, in those cases, in which the remedies that we first employed, because we thought them the best, proved unsuccessful, and whether, in such common cases, they would have us desist from all further attempts to cure the patients, and fairly leave them to their fate, or whether we ought to try other practices and other medicines, new or old, on those patients, in order to give them every chance for their lives ; and in what order, or on what principle of selection and preference, these trials ought to be made. It will be particularly obliging, and not only very useful to the patients, but highly gratifying to me, and I dare say to all my brethren, if they will favour us with a correct and ample catalogue of all the medicines and practices hitherto known and recommended by Physicians, which we ought *not* to employ. To this catalogue I hope they will add, by way of supplement, a list of such new medicines and practices, hitherto unheard of, but hereafter to be recommended, which we must not adopt, nor even try, on any account or pretence whatever. Such directions, admonitions, and catalogues, from a set of men so well qualified to give them, will be a much more effectual *safeguard to the poor*

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than all the charters of the Royal College of Surgeons. On the undeniable principle formerly explained, That whatever is best for the patients is also best for the students to see and learn, and most for the ease, the honour, and the interest of the Professors to do, I can promise for myself, and without the foolish ceremony of asking them any questions, I can venture to promise for all my colleagues, that we shall be eager to study the *monita et præcepta medico-moralia* of Mr John Bell and his clients, and happy to profit by them on every occasion.

Such a work, the product of their joint labours, by explaining and establishing the laws or general principles of moral conduct in Physicians towards their patients, will in the first place refute of course those pernicious and detestable principles on the same subject which I had stated in my former Memorial, (page 138. to 145.), and in this one, (page 388. to 393.), as part of my introductory Clinical Lecture: and in the second place, it will enable them to convict the Clinical Professors of an infinite number of the most horrible atrocities in their hospital-practice, of which atrocities, expressed by strong but dark hints, Mr John Bell has given no other proof but plenty of points of admiration. These, though very cheap, for they cost no more than semi-colons, certainly have great weight: but till the law be clearly ascertained, if he and all his clients were split into points of admiration, and ten of these were posted after every word of his Philippic, they could not prove that the law had been violated.

Such a code of medical moral laws, as I humbly crave of those who have so highly bepraised the Managers of the Infirmary and the Clinical Professors, for a pretended conduct which I should consider as a gross violation of the first principles of law, of justice, of humanity, and of common sense, will serve another good purpose, in which they are deeply interested: It will convince the public that they have some kind of moral principle to direct their professional

professional conduct; a proposition which the whole tenor of Mr John Bell's Answer to me, but especially of the praises bestowed on all who permitted, and all who conducted such clinical lectures, as he described, and the approbation and vote of thanks of his clients for that good work, have rendered more than doubtful. The principles avowed in that work will to many well-meaning people appear less than nothing in morality; something like a negative quantity in algebra, or debt far beyond the value of a person's estate.

Not content with representing the conduct of the Clinical Professors as every thing atrocious and horrible, which could be distinctly expressed in words, or even clearly conceived to be done by Physicians to the poor and unhappy entrusted to their professional care, Mr John Bell, like a man of genius, has availed himself of the boundless power of imagination in those who were to peruse his Philippic. For example, (27, 28.), *The Hospital itself, and all its patients, are at the command of the Clinical Professors ! They walk in among those patients ! look at them ! hang their nosological labels and tallies round their necks ! and send them to their own wards, there to prick off the lines of the prevailing doctrines upon their bodies.*

MACBETH. How now, you secret, black, and midnight hags ?
What is't you do ?

WITCHES. A deed without a name.

This has always been regarded, with good reason, as one of the finest strokes of the sublime and horrible that even the genius of SHAKESPEARE produced: yet it is but justice to Mr John Bell to acknowledge, that he has attained a sublimity of horror far beyond the reach of SHAKESPEARE himself. He has given us *a name without a deed*: and those who have got the name may exert their own imaginations to find a deed corresponding to it in all its horrors. Much as I know of the clinical

nical wards, I must own I cannot even guess what is meant by *pricking off the lines of the prevailing doctrines upon the bodies of the patients* : nor can I guess what is meant by *hanging our nosological labels and tallies round their necks*. It is usual, and I think it should be an invariable rule, to affix the name of every patient at the head of his bed, both to save time and trouble, and also to prevent mistakes : perhaps it would be right to insert on the same card the name of his disease : for aught I know this may sometimes have been done ; but I never heard, nor do I believe, that any such cards, *alias* nosological labels and tallies, were ever hung round the necks of the patients. To do this would be useless, and abundantly ridiculous ; but such a card could no more be hurtful to a patient than a necklace or a locket hung in the same manner. The word *nosological* being one of our technical words, and absolutely unintelligible to those who are not of our profession, may mean any thing, or every thing, the most horrible that a gloomy or a disordered imagination can conceive. Yet the use of our technical nosological names for diseases, instead of their common English names, which the patients and their friends could understand, is a matter of delicacy and kindness to them, and therefore unquestionably of duty on the part of the Physician. The principle in this case is the same as that which leads us, in giving our reports, which are generally in English, to mention in Latin any circumstances that might either alarm or offend the patients ; and also to give almost all our prescriptions in Latin, that the patients in the Infirmary, just like those in private practice, may not be distressed unnecessarily by knowing what medicines they are getting. Supposing, for example, the name of the disease, as well as that of the patient, to be expressed on a card, hung at the top of the bed, there could be no harm in writing *John Black, Hydrothorax* ; or *Mary White, Phthisis* ; but it would be very shocking to those patients, if the one should read, instead of *Hydrothorax*, Water in the breast, and the other, instead of *Phthisis*,

Consumption; for each of them would regard this intimation as sentence of death.

In the whole of that most ingenious, elaborate, and eloquent account, which Mr John Bell has given of the conduct of the Clinical Professors in this Hospital, it is plain that he kept steadily in view the noble principle, at least as old as Terence, probably as old as Menander,

Nil est

Quin malè narrando pœssit depravarier :

Tu id quod boni est excerpis ; dicis quod mali est.

Never, I believe, was the principle more faithfully applied, or better illustrated: but still there was a difficulty, which to men of ordinary genius would have appeared insurmountable; namely, to procure belief of that marvellous and horrible account, or even to make it credible that the author of it, and his employers and abettors, did themselves believe it. The expedient employed for this purpose by Mr John Bell, and fully adopted and sanctioned by his clients, is indeed most admirable; and to the best of my knowledge perfectly original. It consists, as every reader must have observed, in professing the highest approbation of that detestable system, and bestowing the most fulsome praises on the Managers for permitting, and on the Professors for executing, that horrible mode of instruction. The quotations from that part of Mr John Bell's Answer to me being ample and faithful, every reader may judge for himself, whether it was his purpose to represent the Clinical Lectures really as an innocent and laudable institution, or to make them, and the Professors, and the Managers, and the Hospital itself, objects of general indignation and horror. To me it does not appear that this can ever be made a subject of doubt or dispute: yet to that most horrible account are premised the following extravagant compliments (3, 4, 5, 6.) to the Professors, and to the Managers:

nagers: *We hope that no expression of ours will be interpreted as disrespectful to that department of teaching and practice, which we consider as peculiarly honourable to those who fulfil the duty, as the most useful part of that course of education, which has made this school of medicine esteemed above any in Europe.*

The period was most honourable to the Patrons and Managers of this charity, and ever to be remembered, when, indifferent to vulgar prejudice, and undismayed by popular clamour, they permitted this very important department of public teaching to be assimilated with their Hospital. Regardless of every thing but the general interests of science, you received within your walls a department which could bring along with it nothing but public odium.

I firmly believe that the clinical lectures, conducted as they always have been, and I trust ever shall be, are a *very useful* part of the course of medical education in this school: but I am not quite convinced, nor is it necessary at present to enquire whether or not they are literally the *most useful* part of our medical education. I am sure at least that such clinical lectures as Mr John Bell has described, waving all thoughts of the atrocity of them with respect to the patients, would be useless, and worse than useless, with respect to the students. None of these are studying physic as a speculative science of mere curiosity, and wishing to know, or perhaps to see, all the effects, good or bad, of every practice and every medicine on the human body; just as they wish to learn all the known effects of heat and mixture in chemistry. All of them wish to learn the most successful practice of physic, which is to be the serious business of their lives. They might attend many courses of such detestable clinical lectures, and see many thousands of experiments tried on some hundreds of miserable patients, without learning the least of that kind of practice, by the success of which they are themselves to live and prosper. It may be presumed, that every person of good sense, however little acquainted with physic, will under-

stand this at once, and perceive the truth of it. But it may easily be illustrated by similar imaginary instances in other practical arts, which, like physic, depend on scientific principles, and have gradually been improved, both by accidental discoveries and observations, and by well-contrived experiments. If a young man who meant to earn his bread as a watchmaker, instead of learning the practice of an eminent master, should employ himself diligently for seven years in seeing a constant succession of experiments with pendulums, and springs, and balances, and fuses, he certainly would turn out a very scurvy watchmaker. A youth meaning to be a dyer would probably acquire as little useful knowledge of that art, by seeing for seven years some thousands of experiments annually made with all manner of dye-stuffs: and a young brewer, who, instead of learning the valuable art of making good ale, should devote the years of his education to seeing thousands of experiments in malting and brewing, would probably have but few customers, and no customer more than once. It may be judged, therefore, that I at least should not consider the fulfilling of that duty, so exquisitely described by Mr John Bell, as in any degree honourable to the Professors: on the contrary, I should think it infamous, as well as criminal, to have any concern in it. But to judge fully of the merit of Mr John Bell's compliment to the Clinical Professors collectively, and to myself individually as one of them, his account of their practice must be compared with what I have stated very fully and strongly in my former Memorial, (page 138. to 146.), on the subject of trying experiments on patients. If what he has stated as the very purpose of the institution of Clinical Lectures, and the avowed conduct of the Clinical Professors, be true, all that I had said on that subject, in my former Memorial, and in my introductory Clinical Lecture, (quoted page 388. to 393. of this), must be not only the vilest falsehood, but the most detestable hypocrisy. However, I need not be at much pains to vindicate myself from such an inference: for every person who reads that extract from my introductory

troductory Clinical Lecture must admit, that for me, after professing such principles, to have acted in violation of them, that is, to have conducted the Clinical Lectures and Practice in the manner that Mr John Bell has so admirably described, and so highly praised, would have surpassed all power of the human countenance.

Lavish as Mr John Bell has been of his praises of the Managers, for their liberal and honourable conduct, in permitting the institution of Clinical Lectures; and for their firmness in being *indifferent to vulgar prejudice, and undismayed by popular clamour* on that subject; he has omitted many other circumstances, equally true, equally important, and much more to their honour, on that memorable occasion. He ought undoubtedly to have mentioned, that they were unshaken by the frequent earthquakes and still more frequent eruptions of volcanos which occurred at that time; that they were unmoved by the daily eclipses of the sun and moon, which alarmed every inhabitant of Edinburgh except themselves; that they were regardless of the astonishing number of ghosts which used to walk the streets at broad noon, to the great terror of the good living people of Edinburgh; and that they were deaf to all the admonitions of the horses and oxen, who used to speak in every field, as fluently as the ablest lawyers did at the bar. To the best of my knowledge and belief, all these portentous prodigies were just as possible, and as true, as that popular clamour, and vulgar prejudice, which he so highly bepraises the Managers for disregarding; *innuendo*, that there were such prejudice and clamour for them to disregard.

It will perhaps appear a very bold, if not a desperate undertaking, to attempt to prove the *negative* in this case, namely, that at the time when the Medical Clinical Lectures were instituted, that is, several years before I was born, there was no vulgar prejudice, and no popular clamour against them. Yet, considering how generally unfortunate Mr John Bell and his clients have been, with respect

spect to their most important facts, much more strongly asserted than the one at present under consideration, it seems but a reasonable and candid presumption to suppose that they have been at least as unfortunate on this point; and certainly it would be fair and necessary to require of them to give some proof of that fact, which is irresistibly conveyed by their *innuendo*. I am sure I never heard of any such vulgar prejudices or popular clamours having occurred at the time when the Clinical Lectures were instituted; and if any such had occurred at that time, I should think it almost impossible that the memory, the tradition, or the records of them should have been lost in little more than half a century.

I have examined, with the most scrupulous care, the records of the proceedings of the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, at that time, and for twelve years afterwards: but in them I can find no vestige of such things; which, if they had occurred, surely *must* immediately have become known to the Managers, *must* have engaged their most serious attention, and *must* have induced them to explain, as they easily could have done, the nature and purpose of clinical lectures, in such a manner as to remove all vulgar prejudices, and silence all clamours against them. As no record of such things, nor any the slightest allusion to them, is to be found in the minutes of the Managers, we may infer with much confidence, that no such things ever existed.

But further, from many strong and obvious considerations, I think it may almost be proved, *a priori*, that no such vulgar prejudices and popular clamours *could have existed* against the new establishment of clinical lectures.

Supposing, in the first place, that the word clinical and the phrase clinical lectures had never been heard by the good people of Edinburgh before the 1st of February 1748, when Dr Rutherford first announced to the Managers his intention of reading such lectures;

lectures ; it seems to me *impossible* that the good people of this city should have taken alarm or umbrage at such an innocent word or phrase ; which certainly could not convey to them the notion of any thing bad, or dangerous, or even experimental ; for it would have conveyed to them no meaning at all. That new word *clinical* must have been to the vulgar just as unintelligible as any word in the Japanese language : but certainly their curiosity would have been excited to know the meaning of it ; and this curiosity would soon have been completely gratified, by the new word being explained in a manner most satisfactory to them. But in fact the phrase clinical lectures at that time was not absolutely new, even to the vulgar of Edinburgh ; especially to many who had been patients in this Hospital. Many of these, and consequently many more of their friends and acquaintance, must, in the course of the preceding twenty years, have learned the meaning of it by its use and application, just as we learn the meaning of all common words and phrases : and the meaning of clinical lectures, as fixed and learned in that way, must have been precisely such as, on Mr John Bell's own principles, to preclude that perverse, malevolent, and atrocious meaning, which he has been pleased to give it, as synonymous with *experimental*. The fact to which I allude is this : For several years before Dr Rutherford resolved to begin to give regular courses of clinical lectures on the cases of his *medical* patients, Dr Alexander Monro *primus*, as I have been informed by his son the present Dr Monro senior, was accustomed to give *occasionally* clinical lectures on the cases of some of his *chirurgical* patients, when he attended in his turn and operated in this Infirmary. These lectures, and the practice to which they related, though truly *clinical*, Mr John Bell himself must admit, *could not* have been *experimental*, or by any of the patients supposed to be so ; for he tells us expressly that he knows of no experiments in surgery. As Dr Monro *primus* was the most eminent Surgeon in Edinburgh, and probably one of the

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the best in the world, it may fairly be presumed that his patients took no offence, either at him or his clinical lectures. That favourable notion of clinical lectures *must* necessarily have been extended and applied by the patients, and all their acquaintance, to the medical clinical lectures given by Dr Rutherford. The patients, far from having any objections to be under the care of Dr Rutherford in this Infirmary, *must* have regarded that circumstance as a piece of great good fortune to themselves. Dr Rutherford, at that time, if not the very first, was nearly the first, I believe second only to Dr John Clerk, in reputation and practice as a Physician in this city: and it must be remembered, that at the time when he began his clinical lectures, and for more than three years afterwards, all or almost all the Fellows of the College of Physicians attended by monthly rotation in this Hospital. Surely no patient could be so irrational as not to think it better for himself to be under the care of such an eminent Physician as Dr Rutherford, than to take his chance of all the Physicians in Edinburgh, good, bad, and indifferent.

When he bepraised the Managers so highly for permitting the institution of clinical lectures, Mr John Bell seems either not to have known, or wilfully to have suppressed, that the permission given by the Managers, was only that of reading the lectures *in some convenient place under the roof of the Infirmary*. Dr Rutherford did not ask their permission to read *clinical lectures*: it is implied in the intimation which he gave them, that he knew he had a right to read such lectures without asking their permission; which I have no doubt every Professor of Physic had to do, on the cases of those patients whom he treated during his time of attendance by rotation in the Hospital. This right had actually been admitted, and exercised, in the instance of Dr Monro *primus*, with respect to his surgical patients in the Infirmary. I doubt even whether the Managers could have prevented the Fellows of the College of Physicians

Physicians, *not Professors* in the University, from reading such lectures on the cases of their Hospital-patients, when they attended in their turns. Their right to attend in the Hospital was coequal with that of the Managers to regulate its domestic economy and pecuniary concerns: it was unquestionably established by the same charter. In the title of Doctor of Medicine is implied, and in the Diploma conferring that title there is always expressed, the right of teaching physic by lecturing or otherwise, as well as the right of practising it. The Managers could not even have attempted to prevent any of the Physicians from reading clinical lectures on the cases of his Hospital-patients, without first showing, or endeavouring to show, that such lectures were somehow injurious to the patients or to the Hospital. This they never could have shown: on the contrary, it would have been proved indisputably at once, that such lectures could not fail to be very much for the good of the patients: and the Managers would of course have been laughed at, or worse than laughed at, for their foolish and illiberal conduct.

Dr Rutherford, who had the merit of beginning the Medical Clinical Lectures, had also the sagacity to foresee of what importance they might become, both to the Infirmary, and to this Medical School: and therefore very wisely and honourably resolved to make them, from the first, subservient to the pecuniary interest of the Hospital, by not permitting any student to attend them, who did not also pay to the Infirmary. This was the purpose of his intimation, and request to the Managers, and of their permission to him, to have a proper place, under their roof, in which to read his Clinical Lectures. It is self-evident, that these lectures might have been read as well, and as easily, and much more conveniently, in his common place of teaching in the College. The passages already quoted from the minutes of the Managers, (page 404. to 407. of this Memorial), show sufficiently how the permission of separate wards, and at first of ten, afterwards of fifteen, and at last of twenty

patients, to the Clinical Professors, came to pass. This was going on *before* two ordinary Physicians were permanently appointed to the Infirmary; and is in fact, though not expressly in words, a small remnant of the original system of the indiscriminate attendance of the whole College of Physicians: which remnant has been allowed to continue in favour of the Medical Professors, and of their students, and of the funds of the Hospital: and for the good of the public at large. Whatever may be thought of the expediency of permitting the Clinical Lectures to continue, it is evident at least, that, at the time of their institution, the Managers could have neither merit nor demerit in permitting them. It was the act and deed of Dr Rutherford; which they could not have hindered; nor could they have hindered, and therefore it would have been folly, as well as turpitude and guilt, to have permitted Dr Rutherford, and every Fellow of the College of Physicians, to practise in the way that he thought best; that is, to try what remedies and experiments he pleased, on the patients under his care in this Hospital, during his monthly attendance by rotation.

Supposing, however, that there had been a popular clamour and vulgar prejudice against Clinical Lectures, as is implied in Mr John Bell's *innuendo*; the Managers, if they had really been indifferent to it, as he insinuates that they were, far from deserving any praise for such conduct, would have deserved the greatest reproach; they would have been guilty of a notorious neglect and breach of trust, in allowing, not only the pecuniary interests of the institution to be materially injured, but even the benevolent purpose of it to be in a great measure frustrated, by the prevalence of such groundless prejudices and clamours, to which they could easily have put an end, in a manner the most honourable to themselves, most beneficial to the Hospital, and most satisfactory to the public.

The principle to which he imputes that *pretended* conduct on
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their part, and for which he bepraises them accordingly, is, that they were *regardless of every thing but the general interests of science*. If they really were so; if they were regardless of the welfare and of the lives of any of the unhappy sick poor admitted into the Hospital; far from deserving to be praised, they certainly deserved to be hanged, for disregarding the general indefeasible principles of moral conduct, for violating their oath as Managers of the Infirmary, for frustrating the benevolent purpose of it, for sacrificing the lives of many of those patients whom they committed to the care of the Clinical Professors, to be made the subjects, and occasionally the victims, of their cruel but scientific experiments. The Hospital was instituted, and the Managers of it were appointed, for the *relief of the sick poor*; not for the *general interests of science*. These no doubt *must* eventually be promoted by a well-managed hospital; but this eventual benefit *must* result as a secondary object, from the faithful accomplishment of the first and chief purpose of such a charitable institution.

It is truly a wonderful, and to me it seems a perfectly new invention, to praise a set of men, of decent character both in public and private life, for doing what they never did or thought of; or could have done without incurring the blackest guilt and foulest infamy; without making themselves objects of general indignation and horror, and probably even of exemplary punishment. So ingenious a contrivance does infinite honour to the author or authors of it, who ought certainly to take out a patent, to which they are well entitled, in order to secure to themselves, and to the heirs of their talents and virtues, all the profit as well as the praise of their own original invention. There can be no doubt that many thousands, who had not genius enough to think of such an expedient for themselves, will be eager to employ it on numberless occasions; just as many thousands have very freely employed the less perfect contrivance of praising those whom they wished to

traduce, for what good they had done ; and then, after having thus established their own credit, in point of veracity and candour, proclaiming, with every possible aggravation and reproach, whatever was unfavourable, or could be told in a manner unfavourable, to those towards whom they had displayed such exemplary candour and benevolence. *Mrs Candour* (in the *School for Scandal*) had not the honour of this contrivance, as the illiterate vulgar suppose. It was in great use and good repute long before her time ; and generally expressed by the happy phrase of *betraying with a kiss*, in honour of Judas Iscariot, who is supposed to have been the inventor of that mode of complimenting. But there is no reason to believe that he ever thought of so sublime a mode of accomplishing his purpose as the one which has given occasion to these remarks ; and I dare say the proudest day of his splendid life, he would have given both his ears to have been the author of it. The compliment in this case is not a kiss, but a bite, sharper and more envenomed than a serpent's tooth. From the ease and freedom with which Mr John Bell hath availed himself of this happy expedient, and from the high approbation which it soon met with *from his clients*, as was amply testified by their vote of thanks, (most unjustly expressed in the name of the *whole Royal College of Surgeons*,) it may be presumed that it was not quite so new either to him or to them, as it was to me, and to all whose opinion of it I have hitherto had occasion to hear. Long acquaintance, and some familiarity, with such things, are necessary, to get the better of vulgar prejudices, and to enable a person to perceive their merit and to admire them, instead of turning away from them instinctively with disgust and abhorrence.

*Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen ;
But seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.*

If that mode of complimenting have not yet got a name, which I suspect is the case, I humbly propose that henceforth it shall be called, *betraying with a bite*. But this must be understood with a general *salvo jure* in favour of all who may have any claims to the honour of the invention, and any ambition to call it after their own names; and most chiefly in favour of Mr John Bell, if he shall prove, or even choose to assert, that it is *bona fide* his own original contrivance. If so, I consent that henceforth and for ever it shall be called *complimentary jobnobellation*.

Whether the invention be old or new, by whatever name it shall henceforth be called, whoever was the author of it, however familiar it may have been to Mr John Bell and his clients, and however much approved by them; it is at least so uncommon to hear men bepraised for the most detestable conduct of which they could be guilty, that few people will know at first what to think of such praises, and of those who bestow them, and of those on whom they are bestowed. As I know of no real instance which can be employed to explain and illustrate the point in question, I must take an imaginary one for that purpose. I shall suppose an author of superior genius to praise a set of judges for their meritorious conduct, in always attending strictly to the interest of their own families and friends, regardless of every thing else, even in the discharge of their public duty and trust. No person surely can be so stupid as not to see the drift and the malevolence of such praises. It is unquestionably right for every judge, as for every other man, to attend to the interest of his family and his friends; as it is for the managers of an hospital to promote the interests of medical science: but it would be not only wrong, but a shameful breach of trust, and atrocious guilt on the part of judges, or of managers of an hospital, to endeavour to promote the interests, either of their own families and friends, or those of medical science, regardless of their own supreme and sacred duty. Bad as
mankind

mankind may be thought, and violent and inveterate in their controversies as medical disputants certainly are, I do not believe that any of them are so depraved in principle, or so blinded by passion, as to think it innocent or praise-worthy in any individual, or any set of men, to do wrong to some, though but a few, in order to do good to others, however many. I should just as soon believe, that a man who owed L. 1000 in small sums to five hundred individuals, should think it right to procure that large sum by robbery, or theft, from one or two persons, in order to pay those just though small debts : but if the lives of these persons were to be sacrificed, when their property was plundered, for that good purpose, the conduct of the perpetrators would surely be reckoned incredibly atrocious. Yet this unheard-of atrocity is no more or worse than what Mr John Bell and his clients have imputed to the Managers of the Royal Infirmary, and to the Clinical Professors, and have made the subject of their highest praises. The value of those praises, and the purpose of them, I should think cannot be mistaken ; but if any person does not fully understand them, let him consider what ought to be the limits of that commendable liberality and zeal for the interests of science. Would it be innocent and right to sacrifice, for that good purpose, one in a hundred of the patients received into the clinical wards ? or one in fifty, or one in ten of them, or all of them ? Would it not be equally right, and still more meritorious in the Managers of the Infirmary, to extend that permission of trying experiments to all the other patients in the Hospital ? Why should it be confined to those under the care of the Clinical Professors ? Why should not one in fifty, or one in ten, or one half, or all of the patients received into the Hospital, be sacrificed for the general interests of science, without regard to any thing else ? The power of the Managers extends not beyond the walls of the Hospital : but why should not Physicians be permitted to
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try all the same experiments on all their patients, rich and poor, in private practice? Why should they not be praised for all the patients whom in this good cause they kill by retail, as Generals and Admirals are for the enemies they kill in wholesale, for the good of their country?

I trust therefore it is but justice to Mr John Bell and his clients, to suppose that the whole account which they have given of the purpose of clinical lectures, of the manner in which they are conducted, of the merit of the Managers in permitting, and of the Professors in conducting them, is false from end to end. But as this is a very tender point, my supposition is to be understood with the most complete *salvo jure* to them. They are well entitled, and heartily welcome, to repeat and persist in their assertions, and even to endeavour to establish them by proof: any such endeavour, or even such repeated assertions on their part, will soon establish, beyond all dispute, some propositions with respect to themselves, which must be very edifying, and deeply interesting, to the public. They surely cannot fail to perceive, that, if they really hold, or even for whatever reason profess, those principles which I have explained and illustrated, and traced to their necessary consequences, they must, *ipso facto*, be understood to renounce all claim to public esteem or confidence. They will not only prove and illustrate, in the clearest and strongest manner, my doctrine of the absolute necessity of selection among men of their profession, either for hospital-duty or for private practice; but will have the merit of pointing out to the public, which I could not have presumed to do, some of those individuals who ought first and most certainly to be excluded, and held as disqualified for that sacred trust. *Hic niger est; hunc tu Romane caveto*; must be the universal sentiment and caution with respect to every one of them. Any man in his senses, if himself or his family were sick, would as soon

soon think of calling in a mad dog into his house, as a practitioner who held the principles which they have so strongly avowed. Certainly no such practitioner ought to be, or ever would be employed, when one of different principles could be found. But they must also consider, that the other supposition, I mean, that they did *not* hold such principles, and did *not believe* their own assertions, necessarily implies some bitter consequences with respect to themselves; not only deliberate falsehood, but a degree of malevolence, which, for the honour of human nature, I hope is without example; such malevolence, that they were content to make themselves odious and infamous, in order to make the Clinical Professors and the Managers of the Royal Infirmary still more odious and infamous, and the Infirmary itself an object of detestation and horror, in the estimation of their countrymen. This is more than an accidental view of the cloven foot; it is a complete display of the great owner of it in all his hateful ugliness.

The situation of those of whom he has taken such entire possession, and whom he has so strongly marked for his own, is indeed deplorable. A dilemma of the same direful kind with that stated in page 371. but worse in some respects, awaits them here. They either believed, or they did not believe their own assertions. If they *did not* believe, if they *do not* prove them, they must be infamous for asserting such atrocious and malevolent falsehoods. If they *did* believe them, and *still persist* in them, and *now attempt to prove* them, they must be fiends in human shape, who not only delight in guilt and cruelty of the blackest kind, and think it praise-worthy, but have deliberately done all in their power to make it more extensive, and perpetual.

Their case is as hopeless, and fully as much to be lamented, as if they had all, with Mr John Bell at their head, run violently down a steep place into the sea, and been choked in the waters.

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It would be in vain for me to make any more remarks on their past, or to suggest to them any hints with respect to their future conduct; for I am sure they will pay no regard to any thing that I can say to them: but perhaps they will pay some regard to the weighty admonition of the wisest of men, in whose words I shall take my leave of them: "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death."

JAMES GREGORY.

ST ANDREW'S SQUARE, }
16th June 1803. }

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